1: Mi Mi Khaing 1-5 (no date) 1946 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Mon AP9

CHAPTER TWO

B
361
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MOULMEIN, Maul-la-Myaing to us, is a fair and prosperous city. It is fair in its descent from the hills behind, in three successive parallel main streets, to the wide Moulmein River, where seagoing ships can sail in, and an island rich in legend lies dark and green in the sunlit water. It had prospered since it was made the military headquarters of Tenasserim in the British annexation of 1826 until, in about 1900, it had over 50,000 inhabitants and a busy rice and teak export trade. Moulmein is fair also becauset he ridges behind are crowned with pagodas, and the hills and rivers contain waterfalls and caves, but to me it is particularly fair like a queen city that rides athwart her domain, because my father and my mother came from the two ends of the natural sphere of Moulmein's influence, Ye and Thaton, each from about 100 miles away, each sent by the family as an adventurous experiment, to meet and contract an understanding in Moulmein.

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My maternal great-grandfather was a Talaing general, and when I look around at my mother's family I cannot think anything else, for they are all most robust, alive and resurgent; whether I take the members who

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Shan AP 11

they mutter spells and incomprehensible incantations over the "medicine," are looked up to with profound belief and a very considerable deal of awe.

The tattooing on the loins and legs is universal with all Burmans, and nothing more is ordinarily required; but there are very few who have not charms of some kind tattooed on the arms, back, chest, or even on the top of the head, which is shaved for the purpose. These figures are of all kinds—lizards, birds, mystic words and squares, rings, images of the Buddha, and sometimes merely a few scattered dots, the latter especially on the face, between the eyes, over the ears, or on the chin. The colouring matter is almost always vermilion, with drugs and solutions, according to requirement, mingled with it. The blue dye from the lampblack never disappears, but the red colour of the vermilion gradually fades away and vanishes. Nevertheless figures of this kind, more or less distinct, are to be found on Burmans of all ages, so great is the national superstition. Even the town youths, whose limbs are smooth and "unbreeched" as a girl's, are never without some charms of this kind, if it is only the a-nu se, which enables a man to gain the woman he loves. This "drug of tenderness" is composed of vermilion mixed with a variety of herbs and curious things, prominent among which is the bruised, dry skin of the tauktè, the trout-spotted gekko, whose sonorous cry and fidelity to the house where he establishes himself and brings luck, are well known to all who have visited Burma or Siam. It is very sparingly used, a few round spots arranged in the shape of a triangle being of sufficient virtue to ensure the object aimed at. The commonest place for them is between the eyes, but occasionally the se sayā recommends the lips, or even the tongue, and his advice is always followed. This is the only tattooing which women ever have executed on them, and there are not many of them who have it done. The patient is usually a love-sick maiden who is afraid the object of her affection will escape from her, or a girl whom rolling years warn that she must be quick if she would not be condemned to remain an a-pyo heing, an old maid. Except in very desperate cases, however, they always manage to persuade the operator to place the charm on some part of the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

of time, but Mr. Taw Sein Ko says in his report of 1908: "Numerous terra-cotta tiles have been found in the basements and corridors of several of the pagodas. They illustrate scenes in the *jâtakas* and in the life of the Buddha Gautama. They are of two types. In the Ananda and Shwezigôn the tiles are enamelled green and show Chinese influence. In the Petleik pagoda they are of red baked clay and have South-Indian resemblances. All three shrines belong to the eleventh century A.D. The stone sculptures in the Ananda are fine, and the pose, drapery, and contour are distinctly Indian. In the Sein nyet pagoda, halfway between Myinpagân and Thiyipyitsaya, of the eleventh century, the Chinese influence preponderates. The twin Petleik pagodas are at Thiyipyitsaya."

Few, if any, contain actual relics. The cloistered and terraced temples are simply receptacles for huge images of the Buddha and others. The corridors of the Ananda and Gawdapalin are filled with sculptured groups representing events in the life of the Great Master, and figures of eminent disciples and yahanda. In the central recesses, where are the colossal figures of the Buddhas, the light is cunningly admitted from above so as to fall on the calm gilded face, producing a most weird and striking effect. But Pagân would require a monograph itself, and with it should be compared Shwegu, between Mandalay and Bhamaw. That sacred island is a perfect forest of pagodas, and only fails to obtain wider fame because of the existence of Pagân. There are 999 shrines within its limits, and a much larger proportion of these exist intact than is the case with Pagân, though none of them can compare with the magnificence of the Ananda.

The question of the architecture of the Pagân temples, which is so different in style from that found in other parts of Burma, has been fully discussed in Yule's admirable *Mission to Ava*. He omits, however, to notice the fact that Anawrata-saw Min, when he established Buddhism in Pagân, built all the pagodas and temples after the exact model of those then existing in Thatôn, in the same order and of the same size. The town of Thatôn, above Maulmein, was the first settlement of Thawna and Ôttara, the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

thought that the few hours spent at the payā gather up stores of kutho, not less certainly profitable than the social delights of the "duty day" are pleasurable.

The greatest of all the pagoda feasts is, of course, that of the Shwe Dagôn in Rangoon, with its pilgrims, not only from the farthest parts of Burma and far-away Shan hills, but also from over the seas, from Siam and Cambodia and the Corea. But the vastness of the gathering and the proximity of the great town spoil the national character of the festival, and introduce too many elements of nineteenth-century civilisation in the shape of merry-go-rounds and hack carriages. A "jungle" feast is not only more characteristic, but more appreciated in its way by both town and country folk.

There are three old Talaing pagodas near Rangoon, Kyaik-ka-san, Kyaik-ka-lo, and Kyaik-waing, whose annual duty days are looked forward to with pleasure by all the people round about. The feasts all occur in the month of Tabodwè, corresponding to our February or March. I have a suspicion that, were the proper date adhered to, all three would have the same ubone; but such a lavish squandering of the good a popular religion provides for us would hardly meet with lay approval, even if advocated by the most holy of hermits. Accordingly the three pagoda days occur at intervals of a week, without reference to the crescent or waning moon; and latterly, with singular convenience for Burmans occupied in business in Rangoon, have usually been fixed for Sunday; so that English merchants are not troubled with the sudden ailments of their clerks at this season so much as used formerly to be the case. The Kyaik-ka-san is probably the most sacred of the three; containing as it does a tooth and bone of the forehead of Shin Gautama, brought to Rangoon by a yahanda, a blameless mendicant, over whose remains in Rangoon a huge thein-gyi, or ceremonial building, has been erected. Kyaik-ka-lo is, however, seemingly the more popular. It stands on the summit of a little hill about fourteen miles north of Rangoon, and is built of laterite blocks, now faced with bricks covered with plaster. The shrine was built in the second century before Christ, and,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

When there is a boat-race, the opposing crews have a preliminary row over the course with offerings placed on the prow for the nat who guards that stretch of the river. And so on through numberless examples. Some nats achieve fame, and are known far and wide by special appellations. Such is Maung In Gyi, a spirit who is feared in all the district round Rangoon, and away eastward and northward as far as Pegu. He lives in the water, and causes death. A special festival is celebrated in his honour, or rather in deprecation, in the month of Waso, the same in which Lent begins. Others more especially known in Upper Burma are Byindôn, Shwe Pyin-Gyi and his brother, and a drunkard nat called Maung Min Gyaw, to whom great quantities of rice spirit are offered. Uyingyi is a spirit universally known among the Talaings. The chief spirit of a district usually goes by the name of A-shin Gyi, the great lord, or, among the Talaings, Okkaya. Then there are generic names; there is the Hmin nat who lives in woods, and shakes those he meets so that they go mad. There is the Upaka, who flies about in the clouds to spy out men whom he may snap up. There is the Akakaso who lives in the tops of trees, Shekkaso who lives in the trunk, and Bumaso who is content with a dwelling in the roots. The presence of spirits or witches in trees may always be ascertained by the quivering and trembling of the leaves when all around are still.

The Talaings, and many of the Burmans in the Irrawaddy delta, have a regular nat-feast just before harvesting begins. The figure of a woman is fashioned out of straw, and a tamein, kerchief, and other portions of female dress placed along with it in a bullock cart. Great quantities of kauk-hnyin, "sticky rice," are heaped up, and the whole driven in procession round the ripe paddy fields. The figure is then set up in the place where the paddy is to be stored, and the offerings are usually swept away by the boys of the place, whose appetites overcome their fear of the nats, Bumadi, the guardian of the earth, and Nagyi, the guardian of the grain, to propitiate whom the feast is held.

There is a theory that persons who are executed or meet a violent death become nats and haunt the place where they

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

to accumulate money, and their carelessness results in the constant death of their plough-beasts, so that matters usually remain exactly at the same level if the farmer does not actually get into permanent debt. The Scottish Highlanders have a pious wish, "May the free hand always be full!" If it is not always full in Burma it is consoling to think that it is seldom absolutely empty. Still, when the grandson succeeds he ordinarily finds that there is as little actual money hoarded up about the place as there was when the grandfather Po Gyi spent so many borrowed rupees at his uncle's funeral.

If rice cultivation is easy work in the low country, it is very different with the taung-ya, or hill clearings. Here the dense underwood and forest growth has to be cut down; and the more there is to cut the better the crop, for the soil needs fertilising badly, and all that is cut down is burned. Work is begun about January; everything is felled, bushes and all; and after the fallen logs have dried some time in the sun, the brushwood is heaped up round about them and the whole is set on fire. Some of the logs smoulder for weeks —perhaps till the first rains come. Then the ground is rudely dug up with hoes, and the ashes turned in. Cotton-seed is ordinarily mixed with the rice, which is of a quite different variety from that produced in the plains. It is sown broadcast, and the farmer has thereafter only to keep down the weeds, but this is not by any means a light task. The crop is ready by October, and furnishes little more than enough to support the family or community. The scanty manure provided by the wood-ashes is not sufficient to last more than two or three years; and when the crop is secured the party proceeds on to a new settlement, there to repeat the same laborious process. A very ingenious device for lightening the toil is resorted to where there is much heavy timber. Beginning at the bottom, they slightly cut the lowest trees on the upper side only, gradually increasing the depth of the notch as they advance up the hill, until at the top of the clearing they cut the trees completely through. These fall on the row immediately below them, and by their weight knock it down; and so the felling process is continued down to the bottom. Occasionally a tangle occurs

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER XXIV

A GRACIOUS PLOUGHING

LIKE the "royal elder brother" of China, the king of Burma ought to go out once a year to plough the fields. Thibaw Min did not do it during the first two years of his reign, and, as far as I am aware, was equally heedless throughout the later years also. The consequences ought to have been disastrous. According to tradition, the failure of the Lètwin mingala to come off should have caused a drought all over the country. But the Mo hkaung did not ensue; on the contrary, there was Mo kaung: an aspirate makes all the difference between a water-famine and seasonable showers. King Thibaw went very little indeed out of his palace. The annals of the country supply too many instances of kings, who, having gone abroad, found on their return to the palace gates that a usurper had taken possession of the throne in the meantime, and had no better greeting for his predecessor than a short shrift and a red velvet sack in which to plunge his body into the Irrawaddy. This unlovable custom had great weight with King Thibaw; but it was unwise of him to entirely abandon so venerable a tradition as the Lètwin mingala. It was at this ceremonial that one of the earliest marvels in the life of the Buddha Gautama happened. The king Thudawdana, with eight hundred noblemen save one, was ploughing the fields at the annual festival. Many country people came to see the great sight, and the city emptied itself. The maids who had charge of the little Prince Theidat laid him down under the shade of a tree and went to look on. The infant Buddha rose up as soon as they were gone, and sitting

101 241 643 796 178 773

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

527 the plays, of which there are three or four, while some unwearied spirits can only find relief for their exultant triumph in yein dances and irresponsible performances of their own.
[273] Till dawn of day the revelry goes on, but there is nothing like drunkenness. It is exceedingly seldom that you see a drunken Burman out of Rangoon, where they claim to be Europeanised. For a couple of days the excitement lasts, and then the strangers wend their way homewards, and the township calms down to its usual quiet. But for years the great event will be talked of at the local feasts, and the Yein choruses of three or four generations will tell of the gallant struggle when the Daungsatpyan beat the Thônpanhla and broke the long supremacy of the Thônkwa rowers.

177.52 526 It is a great pity that these old contests are not kept up with the spirit that used to characterise them. In 1877 the then Chief Commissioner of British Burma, Mr. Rivers Thompson, believing that they led to unrestrained and dangerous gambling, issued an order forbidding all government officials to have anything to do with them, and advising that great races should be discouraged as much as possible. This policy was continued by Mr. Aitchison (late Sir Charles), and there seemed some danger that the art of making fine racing-boats would be lost, while all the fun and jollity of the old ye-pwè, kôn-pwè, land and water sports, were put an end to, without any decrease in the amount of gambling. The habit is as engrained with the Burman as with the Chinaman, and if there are no boat-races to bet on there are lots of other things, from pony matches to gônnyin-to, on which sporting votaries might stake their money.

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526 177.52 There were still local matches between adjacent villages held, but they were but a sorry imitation of the old festivals, and have unfortunately led to the unpleasant speculations of the West being introduced. "Barneyings," in-and-out rowing, and all the unlovely customs of Western professionalism have sprung up as a consequence of the degradation of the old manly sport. Sir Charles Bernard, who was an ardent athlete himself, did a good deal towards reviving boat-racing. Sports have been held on the Great Royal Lake at Rangoon, it may be hoped only as a preliminary measure to the encouragement of longer contests on

3: Khin Zaw I-5 (no date) 1940 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

be done is a thorough examination of the whole question by a conclave of experts who combine a knowledge of Burmese music with a knowledge of western musical theory. The matter is now extremely urgent. Burmese music seems to be dying out. Perhaps I may be permitted to leave about some threads which will lead future more competent research to their final unravelling. I only hope that the urgency will be recognised and early efforts made to begin a proper study of the music of the country. 533

I have reduced Mr. Mariano's three kinds of scales into one *bona-fide* key—the peculiar major diatonic scale with indeterminate Fourth and Seventh within which there are changes—of key? of mode? I shall not say at present.

With the classical circle of keys I shall deal later.

The four keys still extant, as set out by U Ba Choe and U San Win are presumably the keys of C, F, B, E, in which different prescribed classes of Burmese songs must be played or sung, and in the prescribed order. It would not do to play a *yodaya* ရိုးရာ or a *bawlè* ဘောလဲ in immediate succession to a *kyoh* ကြိး. A song from the *patpyo* ပတ်ပြ class must be the next to follow. Otherwise the new song will jar on the ear. All this is perfectly true. The puzzle is this: **When discussing the laws of Burmese music does the word 'key' in its strictly technical sense apply?** I have met with many difficulties because I have so far been using this word with its strict musical denotations to represent a musical phenomenon which may be, so far as I know, represented by either one or all of the following three:— 533 [01]

1. Actual change of key.

2. Change of mode.

3. Change of 'tessitura'.

Again 'tessitura' is not quite right for the Sanskrit word *aṃça* Hearken to Fox Strangways, "What gives its peculiar flavour to a melody..is the position of *aṃça*. Round it, and round its consonant or correlative (*samwadi*)—a note at the distance of a Fourth or a Fifth from it[1]—are grouped the phrases of the song. They derive their meaning, their point, from their relation to it. It is easy to see that the character of a phrase would completely alter according as the *aṃça*, the salient note of the scale, were made the salient note of the phrase, or not. The *aṃça* may be any place in the scale not excluding the keynote or drone-note. The first section of the

1. In Burmese music, more often a Fourth than a Fifth.

BURMESE MUSIC.

As for the classical cycle of keys, diagrams of which appeared both in U Ba Choe's article and U San Win's book 2, both U Ba Choe and U San Win quote authoritative verses from classical literature (*Nātakaratanakosa* နာဋကရတနကောသ) but regret that not all the keys mentioned are in use in this decadent age. With due reverence for the classics I shall assign these verses like Ruskin's works on art and Pater's, to literature. It is becoming increasingly difficult to fit classical theory with the actual music. Whereas our classical literature came *en masse* from ancient India along with Buddhism many hundred years ago our music seems to have come from the east. Indeed one class of songs *yodaya* ယိုးဒယား came *en masse* from Siam less than two centuries ago. Music is the last thing that could have come with Buddhism. It seems to have developed quite independently of classical literature. In fact Burmese poetry *linga* လင်္ဂ *alaṅkara*) is quite distinct from Burmese song (*thachin* သချင်း) and from both stands massive and remote the Buddhist literature of the *tripitaka* in the Pali language.

What seems to have happened is that while the elegant royalty and courtesans in the palace were delighting in the intricacies of Burmese versification with liberal infusion of both the Pali language and the Buddhist philosophy, music in its robust form was having its origins in animistic ritual (နတ်ပွဲ), in the village when somebody was giving alms and in the paddy-fields when the transplanting of the seedlings were in progress. For the former we have *Byaw*[1] (ဗျော) stick-struck drum songs, and for the latter we have *Bonshay* (ဘုံဆေး) long-drum or *kauksaik* (ကောက်စိုက်) transplanting songs. *Kyoh* (ကြိုး) that most ancient class of Burmese songs also must have been in the beginning a labour chant for concerted action that germinated in ancient row boats, grew into a boat-song, and then developed for royal ears into its present high order of melodic and literary grandeur (*vide* the royal barge songs: ကောင်ဆိုက်ကြိုး when the barge makes port, ကောင်ဆင်ကြိုး when the barge is being towed out by rowers in open boats, ကောင်ကြိုး when the barge is underway[2]. The cadences of these still recall the rhythmic flash of wet oars in the sun. Thus Burmese music had as its sponsor the rustic festivals and the occupation of the hewers of wood and drawers of water, and not the Church as

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1. တေးသမားတို့ဘဝသည် (သို့) ကခုန်ခြင်းစတင်သော 'A dancer's life (or dancing) begins with a tray of banana offerings (or *food* marked by a central fire-bowl stand of plantain trunk) in a *byaw* music party. Till 1698 A. D. when the 8th king of the Nyaungyan dynasty ဧနောင်း *Sané Min* came to the throne there existed only intoned poems ဆိုရုံ ပေါ်သွန်း but no real Burmese music. တေးဝါဒီမင်းကြီး by U Nu. Sun Magazine, 1938.

2. U Ba Choe told me that this was not true. This class of songs used to be played as exercises in the playing of the Burmese harp, when the pupil first learnt to pluck simultaneously certain strings (ကြိုး *Kyoh*). For a full explanation of it see တေးဝီဏာကြိုးကျမ်း by U San Win.

13: Khin Zaw I-5 (no date) 1940 APT Burma
Burmese AP4

533

that the whole system of *ga nak*, the general term for the thing becomes an elaborate vehicle of light and shade. It brings the notes of a melody, as surely as the various light and shade of a picture brings the contours of the face, from the flat into the round; which again is precisely what harmony does for them, by assigning to the successive notes varying degrees of consonance. There is an obvious reason for grace-notes wherever there is no harmony. For a melody is a sentence with important 'words' and unimportant, and grace-notes and harmonic texture are the only two things that can always be applied to enhance this importance. For stress and quantity, which serve this purpose in verse, are not so well adapted to music. Stress, which is additional volume, is difficult to achieve with low notes; and quantity, which is additional duration, alters the melody itself, imposing on it from without something which should come from within."

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Although Burmese 'grace' may not be so elaborate or systematised as the Indian *gamak*, much of the above quotation equally applies to Burmese music. Much will have to be pointed out in notation when I deal with the problem of the 'writing' of Burmese music[1]. Mr. Mariano concluded: "It is a matter for great regret that the beautiful music which the Burmans unquestionably possess is being forgotten. The modern tendency is to imitate European and Indian themes, and the time is not distant when genuine Burmese music will be a thing of the past."

533
178

He wrote that 40 years ago. Nowadays, the gramophone record business has encouraged wholesale filching of jazz tunes, first divested of harmony and then re-dressed in an imitation of it, with Burmese words making ungainly efforts to step along side by side with the wholly unsuitable western tunes. Shades of Mariano!

It is a matter for rejoicing that a state school of fine-arts has come into being. How much more rejoicing there would be in the hearts of lovers of true Burmese music if the government, instead of merely opening a class for teaching how to play certain musical instruments, had seized upon the means of saving real Burmese music from oblivion. The implacability of business so far as gramophone records are concerned, the rapid deterioration of public taste pandered to by radio and gramophone, the invasion

[207]
[296]

1. A full treatment of Burmese grace with classified examples in staff-notation will require a separate chapter in the manner of the chapter on Ornamentation in Arnold Dolmetsch's *Interpretation of the music of 17th and 18th centuries*. For the present see specimens in the gramophone violin part of *Bow-lè*.

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

V

INTRODUCTION

101 122 This paper is a summary report of field research which I conducted in the village of Tadagale, Insein District, Burma, during the period November, 1949, to April, 1950. The work was made possible by a scholarship under the Fulbright Program, supplemented by an Area Research Training Fellowship granted by the Social Science Research Council. I am indebted to both of these organizations for the support of my work.

114 121 A word seems in order concerning the selection of Tadagale as a community for study. It was my original intention, before I reached Burma and learned in detail of the then prevailing conditions, to do fieldwork among the Burmese of the delta or dry zone, using as a base a single village which would more or less exemplify contemporary Burmese peasant culture. Nothing was more impossible, in view of the internal conditions, and the plan had to be abandoned. After several months of efforts to shift my research to the Shan States, during which time one project had to be abandoned before it actually commenced, and another came to an abrupt halt in its second week -- both because of the spread of the internal disturbances to the areas concerned -- it became clear that the greatest assurance of continuity of research was to be found in the general area near Rangoon. After a brief survey of communities within a few miles radius of the capital, Tadagale was chosen. It appeared most suitable for several reasons, among them accessibility, manageable size, and, owing to its contact with Rangoon, the possibility of studying socio-cultural change.

124 The fieldwork was done by interviewing of informants, by direct observation of events and behavior, and by the compilation of a detailed census concerning household membership, occupations, marital status, religious affiliation, group membership, income, and other matters. With the aid of a fluent, college-educated interpreter fieldwork was carried on daily.

114 121 This paper does not purport in any way to be a complete or definitive study. An approximation to such a report, I am convinced, can result only from fieldwork done under a set of conditions very different from those that were possible for the research here reported. These should include extended continuous residence (minimally one year) in the community by the investigator, and participation by him in community life without self-imposed or assumed separateness or distinction from the people; and a command of the native language adequate to conduct interviews and conversations without the use of interpreters. For Southeast Asia especially, the real fulfillment of such conditions is most difficult, but to the extent that they are met in ethnographic work the material obtained will possess richness and depth. Since, for a variety of reasons, these conditions could not be met in my study of Tadagale, no apology is offered for the inadequacies of this report. It is well, however, in these days of studies of 'cultures from afar' and other short-cut methods of fieldwork, to indicate how we have worked and how our results are thereby affected. Since knowledge of contemporary Burmese village culture is virtually non-existent, a report such as this perhaps may be regarded as a small contribution towards filling a large void.

[127] 114 132 I am much indebted to Miss C. A. Rustom, of Mandalay, my interpreter, whose tact and insight certainly minimized the limitations that are inherent in fieldwork done by means of an interpreter. Dr. Paul F. Cressey of Wheaton College (Massachusetts), who was teaching in Rangoon University at the time of

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

I

THE VILLAGE SETTING AND THE PEOPLE

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Tadagale is a suburban community of Lower Burma, about four and one half miles north of the city center of Rangoon, chief port and national capital of the Union of Burma. To reach the village most readily one travels by automobile northward from the city along Prome Road, a main highway, to the junction with Kokine Road, beyond the city limit, on to which one turns eastward. After a quarter mile or so, one again goes northward on to a bumpy, poorly surfaced road which soon becomes dirt and terminates abruptly, after another quarter mile, at a small bridge. Tadagale means 'small bridge,' and it is after this bridge that the village is named. A few steps walk over the bridge brings one almost to the center of Tadagale. (See map on following page.)

361 342

Tadagale is more or less a 'line' type village, about 3000 yards in length. The domestic dwelling area is constituted by houses and granaries strung along the sides of a main dirt path which is just wide enough for a single bullock cart — or a jeep — to pass without scraping the bushes and trees. This area is heavily shaded from the intense tropical sun by many trees that grow in the household compounds and along the path; palms and banyans are the most prominent types. The houses are rectangular in shape, with low, slanting roofs, and platform-like porches in front. Among the more prosperous families of the village it is not unusual to find houses of plank construction, with roofs of corrugated iron. More frequently, houses are made of bamboo matted sides and palm thatched roofs. Every two or three houses share a well, which is simply an unlined and uncovered hole of perhaps ten to twelve feet in depth. In almost every compound there is a vegetable garden, from which the family supplies itself and realizes some cash income by the sale of any surplus.

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To the east of Tadagale's dwelling area, perhaps five hundred yards distant and running parallel to it, is a railroad line, which begins in Rangoon and terminates at Mingaladon, about five miles north of Tadagale. A small railroad station is located at the eastern terminus of the path on which one finds oneself immediately after crossing the bridge that leads into the village. The villagers do not use the railroad nearly so much as they use buses, which run from Tadagale to Rangoon frequently.

361 133

Beyond the railroad line, still farther east, lie the paddy fields, extending out to the winding Pazundaung Creek. This creek begins at the southeastern tip of Rangoon, where the Rangoon and Pegu rivers join, and flows in a twisting course northward to separate Rangoon and the heavily populated area immediately north of the city from the sparsely settled area to the east.

132

Tadagale's climate is that of the tropical monsoon belt, with three well-defined seasons. From the end of October to about the end of February is the Dry Season, characterized by the absence of rain, with cool mornings and evenings. The daily maximum temperature is in the 80's and the humidity is moderate. English-speaking Burmese call this season winter; at night it is cool enough to sleep under one light blanket. The Hot Season commences at the beginning of March and lasts until June. Temperatures rise to daily maxima in the middle to high 90's, the earth is parched and cracked, and the loose dirt on the village paths, caught by occasional breezes, forms choking

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

565 556 basis of invidious distinctions. Persons of means are esteemed more for the socially valued uses to which they may put their money, such as charity, ceremonial activities, and support of the clergy, than for sheer richness or consumption.

Economic Change

178 101 433 The changing pattern of Tadagale's economic life may be described from the point of view of shift from a once largely subsistence economy to one based more upon commodity production and exchange. In discussing this shift, the general trends are best indicated if we focus upon Lower Burma rather than upon Tadagale exclusively. It is desirable to make this large area our unit because pertinent data are available for it, whereas historical information specific to the village is somewhat scant and fragmentary. The term "Lower Burma" is an administrative and geographical one. It comprises about 81,000 square miles and a population of some 9 millions, four of the administrative divisions in the highly fertile, deltaic 'rice-bowl' of Burma.

178 433 1. Background. The trend from a relatively self-sufficient subsistence economy, with little dependence upon money, to a more commercialized economy coincides with the coming of British colonial rule in Burma. Our historical perspective thus extends over a period of about 150 years. Within this span of time, profound economic change occurred in Lower Burma. Here we cannot give a detailed account of events from decade to decade, but must limit ourselves to a brief consideration of the major trends.

175 433 361 In pre-British Lower Burma, villages consisted of what might be called islands of clearance in a big jungle. In these settlements the Burmese peasants lived by cultivation of paddy and vegetable gardens. Individual small holdings were the rule, and the size of the plot depended almost entirely upon need. No incentive existed to clear and cultivate land beyond the requirements of household subsistence and taxes, paid in kind, to the representative of the Burmese Crown. Cotton, from the dry zone of central Burma, was spun and woven into cloth, and garments were made in the local community. Housing was of a simple bamboo and thatch type, made of materials available locally. The bullock cart provided transport on the relatively few occasions that it was necessary for the Lower Burma villager to travel distances that could not be walked. Contact between villages was minimized by the expanses of intervening, uncleared jungle country. In Tadagale, for example, one of our oldest informants was able to recall the period of his youth, around 1885, when jungle clearance and settlement was still taking place, bringing Tadagale into closer communication with other communities in the area. Local craftsmen provided the villagers with simple utensils, tools and implements.

178 433 436 456 When British colonialism took over, money came to dominate over barter. Taxation was ordered to be paid in money. The Burmese cultivator was encouraged to clear the heavy jungle, cultivate more land, sell surpluses of paddy to commercial millers, and spend his money on attractive manufactured goods imported from England, which were on display in the town shops and bazaars. Moneylenders, some of them Burmese, but especially Indians of the moneylending Chettiar caste from Madras, who could enter Burma freely, were at hand to loan money in fairly unlimited amounts to the Burmese peasants. Thus the latter could finance the expansion of their cultivation. Rates of interest charged were unregulated, and commonly ranged from 10% to 35% per year. The Burmese peasant was an easy victim: he was, at first, entirely unsophisticated in money

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

591 matter. The wife's opportunities for social intercourse with her family of orientation are, of course, greatest when residence is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by visits from time to time. People from Tadagale seldom marry individuals from villages that are very distant. The structural features of bilaterality and absence of extension militate against inequality and rule domination in the family.

562 Burmese culture is frequently remarked for the equality of the sexes, in contrast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes seems to be the historic resultant of two patterns of thought. One is the apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal inheritance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal division of property in the event of divorce, a prominent female role in social and economic life, and the absence of transmission of surnames. The other thought pattern dates from the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese concepts: whatever ideas of male superiority exist stem from Buddhist ideas of reincarnation, it being assumed that only a man can attain reincarnation.

593 In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of the family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

Certain observances and taboos, reflective of a deferential attitude towards males, are expected of a wife. She is careful that her lower garments do not touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions are followed as a matter of course by village wives and will be broken deliberately only as an act of malice by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband for some reason.

837 Despite the various equalitarian aspects of husband-wife relations, there is a tendency towards a double standard of sexual conduct. A husband who has reason to believe that his wife is engaging in extra-marital affairs is very likely to display violent anger, beat her, and break up the marriage. The wife of a philandering husband, on the other hand, will usually do no more than display hurt feelings for a brief period; rarely will she separate from her husband, especially if they have children.

593 Siblings. It is the duty of the younger to show deference to the elder. This pertains to the order of serving food, fetching and carrying things, and even the arrangement of sleeping mats -- a younger sibling should never sleep with his feet extended towards an elder sibling. Upon the death of a parent, the eldest child of the same sex assumes that parent's socio-economic role in the family.

Father and Daughter. Consistent with the age principle, it is a daughter's duty to be obedient and to wait upon her father. Once an unmarried daughter passes the age of puberty, her father is expected to lead a circumspect and moral life more than ever before. Any deviant sexual behavior or drunkenness on his part reflects upon his daughter and detracts from her marital chances. [581]

Mother and Son. Although a son owes obedience to his mother, her claim upon him in this regard is tempered by the fact that, in Burmese Buddhist

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

776 delight of her life; and it would seem to me that
779 she must believe in a God and in prayer after all.
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So though I found much in these books that
771 was believed by the people, and much that was
779 to them the guiding influence of their lives, yet I
182 was unable to trust to them altogether, and I was in doubt where to seek for the real beliefs of these people. If I went to their monks, their holy men, the followers of the great teacher, Gaudama, they referred me to their books as containing all that a Buddhist believed; and when I pointed out the discrepancies, they only shook their heads, and said that the people were an ignorant people and confused their beliefs in that way.

779 When I asked what was a Buddhist, I was told
795 that, to be a Buddhist, a man must be accepted into
182 the religion with certain rites, certain ceremonies, he must become for a time a member of the community of the monks of the Buddha, and that a Buddhist was he who was so accepted, and who thereafter held by the teachings of the Buddha.

But when I searched the life of the Buddha, I could not find any such ceremonies necessary at all. So that it seemed that the religion of the Buddha was one religion, and the religion of the Buddhists another; but when I said so to the monks, they were horror-struck, and said that it was because I did not understand.

114 In my perplexity I fell back, as we all must, to
182 my own thoughts and those of my own people; and
779 I tried to imagine how a Burman would act if he
● 101 came to England to search into the religion of the English and to know the impulses of our lives.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

I saw how he would be sent to the Bible as the source of our religion, how he would be told to study that if he would know what we believed and what we did not—what it was that gave colour to our lives. I followed him in imagination as he took the Bible and studied it, and then went forth and watched our acts, and I could see him puzzled, as I was now puzzled when I studied his people.

I thought of him reading the New Testament, and how he would come to these verses:

'27. But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

'28. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

'29. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid him not to take thy coat also.

'30. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.'

He would read them again and again, these wonderful verses, that he was told the people and Church believed, and then he would go forth to observe the result of this belief. And what would he see? He would see this: A nation proud and revengeful, glorying in her victories, always at war, a conqueror of other peoples, a mighty hater of her enemies. He would find that in the public life of the nation with other nations there was no thought of this command. He would find, too, in her inner life, that the man who took a cloak was not forgiven, but was terribly punished—he used to be hanged.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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It is true that it is part of their great theory of life that the souls of men have risen from being souls of beasts, and that we may so relapse if we are not careful. Many stories are told of cases that have occurred where a man has been reincarnated as an animal, and where what is now the soul of a man used to live in a beast. But that makes no difference. Whatever a man may have been, or may be, he is a man now; whatever a beast may have been, he is a beast now. Never suppose that a Burman has any other idea than this. To him men are men, and animals are animals, and men are far the higher. But he does not deduce from this that man's superiority gives him permission to illtreat or to kill animals. It is just the reverse. It is because man is so much higher than the animal that he can and must observe towards animals the very greatest care, feel for them the very greatest compassion, be good to them in every way he can. The Burman's motto should be *Noblesse oblige;* he knows the meaning, if he knows not the words.

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For the Burman's compassion towards animals goes very much farther than a mere reluctance to kill them. Although he has no command on the subject, it seems to him quite as important to treat animals well during their lives as to refrain from taking those lives. His refusal to take life he shares with the Hindu; his perpetual care and tenderness to all living creatures is all his own. And here I may mention a very curious contrast, that whereas in India the Hindu will not take life and the Mussulman will, yet the Mussulman is by reputation far kinder to his beasts than the Hindu. Here the

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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Burman combines both qualities. He has all the kindness to animals that the Mahommedan has, and more, and he has the same horror of taking life that the Hindu has.

Coming from half-starved, over-driven India, it is a revelation to see the animals in Burma. The village ponies and cattle and dogs in India are enough to make the heart bleed for their sordid misery, but in Burma they are a delight to the eye. They are all fat, every one of them—fat and comfortable and impertinent; even the ownerless dogs are well fed. I suppose the indifference of the ordinary native of India to animal suffering comes from the evil of his own lot. He is so very poor, he has such hard work to find enough for himself and his children, that his sympathy is all used up. He has none to spare. He is driven into a dumb heartlessness, for I do not think he is actually cruel.

The Burman is full of the greatest sympathy towards animals of all kinds, of the greatest understanding of their ways, of the most humorously good-natured attitude towards them. Looking at them from his manhood, he has no contempt for them; but the gentle toleration of a father to very little children who are stupid and troublesome often, but are very lovable. He feels himself so far above them that he can condescend towards them, and forbear with them.

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His ponies are pictures of fatness and impertinence and go. They never have any vice because the Burman is never cruel to them; they are never well trained, partly because he does not know how to train them, partly because they are so near the

HOME

Home is Pathwe

Home is the village of Pathwe, Pantanaw Township, Maubin district, Lower Burma. It is located on one of the countless small streams of the Lower Irrawaddy estuary about ninety miles west of Rangoon. The country is a flat alluvium plain dissected by myriads of streams and canals. The monotony of marshy plains is relieved by occasional clumps of trees and tall reeds which flank the streams. The land is a result of depositions of silts from upstream by the Irrawaddy river and its tributaries - a process which is going on today as Lower Burma extends into the bays of Bengal and Martaban. When asked how long his family had lived in the village of Pathwe, U Myaing replied :

"My parents were born here and their parents before them and their's before them - as far back as we can remember."

The village of Pathwe occupies the adjacent banks of three streams at the point where they join.

The larger town of Pantanaw is located some three miles upstream. The section U Myaing lives in is called TWA-GYI-BET (Big-village-side) and is the main residential area of Pathwe. Directly across the stream, which is about 200 feet wide at this point, are TWA-LAY-BET (small-village-side) and PAYA-GYI-DAUNT (Big-pagoda-corner).

TWA-GYI-BET consists of four rows of houses placed 200 feet apart parallel to the main branch of the stream. The rows consist of about fifty houses each and are separated by brick or earth roads. The brick road is raised about three feet to form a passageway in time of floods. Communal lavatories flank both sides of the village rows and the ones on the side of the river have been located about 60 or 70 feet back from the edge of the river "in order not to pollute the water." The lavatories in the village differ from one another, in that some of them are in the house itself and others are outside by a small passageway connected to the house. The houses with lavatories in them depend on the water to carry away the droppings in the rainy season.

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They are not eaten at all in the camp. One bundle of these leaves cost an anna in Pantanaw. They are eaten as TOZAYA with NGAPI water. They do not need to be boiled but can be eaten as they are after being washed. For one eating about 45 leaves are needed.

SHWE-PAYON-THEE, (Golden pumpkin: Cucurbita pepo, D.C.): In Pathwe this fruit was eaten about three or four times a month. One fruit lasted for three meals and costs four annas. It has not been eaten in camp and is not greatly desired. SHWE-PAYON-THEE is cooked with dried fish. The fruit is very large and has to be chopped into pieces and added. Sessamum oil has to be cured with onions, and then the mixture is added to it. NGAN PYAR YE is an ingredient, but not chillies. This dish is eaten after mixing thoroughly with rice or after burying small pieces in small mounds of rice.

THANA-THEE (Cucumber: Cucumis sativus, Linn.): Eaten two or three times a month in Pathwe, one fruit measuring about one foot by two inches cost two annas and lasted a meal. It is eaten four or five times a month in camp, but the fruit here measures two inches by eight inches and cost two annas. One fruit is used for one meal. Cucumber can be eaten in two ways - either as a pickle or as a dish. To make pickle dried prawns have to be pounded, cucumber scraped into small slivers, sessamum oil has to be cured with onions and poured onto the cucumber and prawns. Some fish juice and pounded dried chillies are added. This preparation is eaten buried in handfuls of rice. To make the dish, the prawns are skinned and the cucumber peeled. The cucumber is then sliced and mixed with the prawns. Then sessamum oil is cured with the sliced onions, and the mixture of prawns and cucumber is placed in the oil. Some fish juice and little water are also added. This is known as cooking in the KYAW-CHET manner. Food cooked in this way can be either poured onto the rice, or the liquid may be taken as soup and the pieces buried in rice and eaten.

HMO WA DO (Water fern leaves, Marsilea Minuta): These were obtained free from the fields. One small bundle consisting of about eight were eaten about four times a year in Pathwe. This has been eaten only once since the family's arrival in camp. One bundle costs one anna. It is eaten as TOZAYA with NGAPI. It cannot be made into a dish. It does not need to be prepared in any way, except for washing with water and removing the roots.

HMO (Mushrooms of many varieties): Mushrooms were eaten three times a month in Pathwe using 50 ticals for one meal. They cost two rupees a viss. Not eaten in camp. Mushrooms are cooked with prawns. The prawns are skinned and mixed with cured sessamum oil, onions and fish juice, and a little water is added. This is a KYAW CHET (fried-cooked). Mushrooms cooked in this way are eaten with handfuls of rice.

KAW BI DOKE (Cabbage: Brassica oleracea, Linn., sub-species capitata): One cabbage about seven inches in diameter was eaten at two meals per month costing six annas in Pathwe. In camp the vegetable is eaten two or three times a month, 25 ticals at a cost of three annas per meal. This is eaten with prawns. The cabbage is sliced, sessamum oil cured with onions, fish juice added, and the cabbage fried. This is also eaten either mixed with rice or buried in rice.

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KA NAN (crab: Crustacean, Potamon sayanum): Crab has not been eaten by the family at all. It was not eaten because in Pantanaw the crabs were very small and quite unlike the big ones that can be obtained in Rangoon. Owing to this factor they do not know how to cook or to otherwise prepare crabs for food, and ow in the camp, even though crabs are available, they do not inquire into the price of crabs. Ma Aye Myaing still does not know how to cook crabs for a meal.

NGYUNT (tender sprouts of bottle gourd: Lagenaria vulgaris Ser): NGYUNT soup, consisting of five sprouts costing one anna boiled in water was made four to six times a month in Pathwe. In Rangoon one bundle consisting of two sprouts cost one anna. Two bundles were used for one meal, but eaten only three times during the last year.

21:•Htin Aung E-5• (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

INTRODUCTION

1. The Rise of a Vernacular Literature in Burma

Burma is a small country lying between the two great countries of India and China, and at a first glance it may perhaps be thought that Burmese civilization has little of originality or individuality, and that it is only a minor branch of the Indian and Chinese civilizations. That is not the case. The peninsula of Indo-China shades into India and China along its borders, but Burma proper, where Burmese is spoken,[1] lies away from these borders, and therefore preserves special characteristics of her own. Surrounded on three sides by highlands and on the fourth by the sea, Burma has always remained insular, more insular even than England. The barriers, however, were not impassable, and there were routes from India and China along which foreign influences came, but in such a restricted way that Burma could absorb them without losing her individuality. Even now, when with better sea communications foreign influences come in more extensively, the power of absorption possessed by Burma and the Burmese still leave them their individuality, and they are still a nation with a civilization of their own.

According to early chronicles which most English scholars, except Mr G. E. Harvey, have accepted as quite reliable, the kingdom of Prome in Lower Burma was flourishing as a civilized State by about the fifth century before Christ. A few centuries earlier the first kingdom, named Tagaung, in Upper Burma, is said to have been founded by a king who came overland from India. He found the natives quite civilized and willing to be more so. That kingdom was destroyed, but was revived and restored by another king from India during the lifetime of the Buddha. It, too, was destroyed and the kingdom of Prome was later founded by a prince of Tagaung. Prome is generally believed to have dominated the regions around

[1] Burma proper is the valley of the Irrawaddy. On the west of it are the Chins and allied tribes, on the north Kachins, and on the east the Shans. They were under the Burmese kings and are now under the Government of Burma. Being backward races, except the Shans, they have no writing.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1980) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
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it, carrying on trade with India and the rest of Indo-China. During this period Burmese dancing and music and poetry, as embodied in songs, perhaps assumed definite and national forms. But there was no writing. The kings that came from India probably knew writing, but their knowledge was perhaps limited; in any case, it never reached the people. The introduction of Buddhism into the country brought no writing, as it came through traders whose knowledge of religious learning was meagre. The few religious tracts preserved in monasteries were looked upon merely as curious and sacred objects. The religion, feeble from the beginning, decayed and soon disappeared. The kingdom came to an end in the first century A.D.[1]

A new kingdom was founded in Upper Burma at Pagan, which controlled the land and river trade-routes, and as a result of its commercial advantages, it became a powerful kingdom with the ascension to the throne of Anawrahta in 1044. From that point Burmese history ceases to be conjectural. Through the influence of the learned and saintly monk, Shin Arahan, Buddhism in one of its purest forms was introduced into the kingdom by Anawrahta. With it, writing was also introduced. The alphabet was the 'Square Pali', and the literature the *Three Pitakas* embodying all the religious teachings in Pali. Curiously enough, the alphabet and the literature did not come directly from India, but from Burma itself—from the Talaing kingdom of Thaton. The Talaings were a branch of the Burmese race. Many think that they were a mixture of native tribes with Indian traders. I venture to disagree. The earliest inhabitants of Burma were Indonesians, who settled on the coast of Burma during successive 'drifts' of humanity from the west, through India, to further east. Later, there was an infiltration of Mongolian tribes, who came down the rivers from the North. Inland, where the Indonesian element was weak, the new-comers dominated and later became the Burmese; along the coast where the Indonesian element was strong the tribes united and became the Talaings. However, all this is mere conjecture. The early history of the Talaing kingdom of Thaton, which Anawrahta had to destroy to obtain possession of the alphabet and the *Three Pitakas*, is not known, except that it was perhaps in existence a few centuries before Christ and was under the influence

[1] Pe Maung Tin and G. H. Luce, *The Glass Palace Chronicle*; A. Phayre, *History of Burma*. G. E. Harvey in his *History of Burma* contends that the first Burmese kingdom was Prome, and that it flourished only in about the seventh century A.D.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
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of Hindu traders from South India. After the introduction of Buddhism into South India by Asoka in 261 B.C., the traders began to bring Buddhist elements to Thaton. With the establishment in the third or fourth century after Christ of the Hindu kingdoms in Java and Sumatra, Thaton became an important trading centre, and with the rise of a great Buddhist centre at Conjeveram in Madras in the fifth century, the Talaings began to receive religious writings in Pali. From that time onwards, learning was definitely established in the kingdom, and, as a result, a Talaing literature came into being. Anawrahta was interested in Pali only, and therefore when he destroyed the city, he burnt all the manuscripts except those in Pali.[1]

The writing and learning that were thus introduced into Pagan took root at once. Prose and poetry as embodied in the language of the court and in songs had been in existence long before, though unwritten, and now the new learning turned them into written forms and began to develop them. Pali was studied everywhere, and in the newly-built temples with their crowded monastic life, works in Pali on religion, on Pali grammar and prosody, and on the legal code of Manu came to be produced.[2] Translations were also made, and soon Pagan became famous throughout India for its Pali scholarship. But

[1] The Burmese language belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese group, whereas the Talaing belongs to the Mon-Khmar group. In spite of Anawrahta's conquest and in spite of the fact that racially they were cousins, the Talaings became completely merged with the Burmese only in the eighteenth century. The probability of the Sanskrit drama reaching the Talaings is considered in chap. ii.

[2] G. E. Harvey, op. cit., pp. 59, 70.

The most famous for literary activity was the *Kyauku Ohmin* temple. Though built perhaps even before Anawrahta, when a corrupted form of Buddhism was prevalent, it is still in an excellent condition (Harvey, p. 17).

The code of Manu was compiled originally in Sanskrit, during the period 200 B.C.–A.D. 200. Since that time it has been one of the chief sources of Hindu law (J. D. Mayne, *Hindu Law*). The Burmese received it in a Talaing-Pali version in which the sacerdotal element had been done away with. That explains why, although Manu is one of the chief sources also of Burmese Buddhist law, it has little in common with Hindu law. The existence of the code as the chief source of Talaing law (Harvey, op. cit., p. 111) raises again the question, how far were the Talaing writings under the influence of Sanskrit and its literature? We shall never know. When Anawrahta destroyed Talaing institutions and historical and literary works, he intended that all knowledge of the past greatness of the Talaings should pass into oblivion so as to smooth his way towards unifying Burma into one single State.

Pali has been, since 1044, the classical language of Burma.

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Burmese AP4

was appointed viceroy of the Seven Hill Districts of Mindon, situated between Arakan and the river Irrawaddy. It was during the Age of Triumph, the period when the native interlude and the Siamese-influenced court drama were being fused. At the miniature court of the viceroy were presented interludes and court plays, and *Hsaings* were publicly recited. In his palace,[1] a special apartment was built for the regular performance of plays and interludes, a special troupe of actors was taken under his patronage, and more famous troupes were often invited from the capital. In 1824 the unfortunate viceroy failed to stem the advance of the British forces, and he was executed and his palace burnt by royal order. From 1825 to 1852, the date of the second Anglo-Burmese war, Mindon was administered directly from the capital, and times were difficult; therefore dramatic performances at Mindon were few and far between. Though the son of the late viceroy was living, he wisely chose to leave the court, the administration of justice and politics alone, and as a result, he had neither the influence nor the wealth to patronize the drama. Therefore, as far as the drama was concerned, a gap resulted in the tradition of the family. In 1852 the British annexed the whole of Lower Burma, and Mindon passed into British hands. The viceroy's grandson was appointed chief administrative officer. This officer, my great-grandfather, took his office to be exactly similar in rank to that of his grand-sire, and though the British Government did not know of it—or the authorities at Rangoon did not care—he restored in effect the court of his grandfather, and dramatic performances were revived.[2] To him I am indebted for preserving much of the custom and tradition of the executed ancestor. To his revival of official performances of plays and interludes, I owe my information gathered from members of my family and the townspeople of Mindon. While the court poet, U Pon Nya, was further developing the drama, continuing the work of U Kyin U at the Burmese capital of Mandalay, in the out-of-the-way town of Mindon the interludes were still being performed. But it must not be supposed that Mindon was the only place where the interlude lived on. It survived in many places alongside the plays of the two great dramatists. But only from Mindon have I been able to obtain first-hand information and

[1] Though it was termed the 'palace', it was by no means a stately mansion or an imposing castle. Except for its gilded spires, emblems of the king's authority, it was just a big house of timber and bamboo with thatched roofs.

[2] He was U Sauk, Extra Assistant Commissioner.

21: Htin Aung . E-5 (ca. 1930) 1957 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

175 At the first blast of the jewelled shell, their matted locks grow
533 crisp.
535 At one blow from their copper gong their painted limbs leap.
Pearl streams glitter as they twist, as though the stars were shaken
in the sky
Flowery crowns nod and whirl, with the motion of dragon or
snake.[1]

The music and the dance were strange enough and pleasing enough for the Emperor to bestow minor honorary offices at the court on the leaders of the deputation. Burmese music and dancing continued to develop, and at least the music reached great artistic heights in the kingdom of Pagan, for the kings were its patrons; Alaungsithu, king from 1112 to 1167, was himself an accomplished musician, and introduced new notes and tunes. With all its developments, the music remained so national that when the great Anawrahta (1044–77) led a raiding expedition into Bengal and wanted to leave a sign that he had been there, he set up, not stone pillars as was the practice of most eastern kings of the period, but stone images of Burmese musicians. And when Alaungsithu, his grandson, later raided Bengal, he found them; and men say that the stone musicians played tunes as if they were alive, to the great delight of the homesick king.[2]

●[101] Music and dancing could develop on their own without being overwhelmed by an already developed drama, as the Burmese did not know of the great Indian epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, or the Sanskrit drama and its kinsman the puppet show, although Java and the rest of Indo-China, through their Hindu colonists and kings, had definitely adopted the Indian epics and the drama as their own by about the sixth or seventh century. This absence of Hindu influence on Burmese music and dancing explains why the Burmese are the only civilized nation in the Far East who do not possess the fighting dance—the dance essentially connected with the great Indian epics.[3]

[1] The extract is taken from G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 14.

[2] Harvey, pp. 39 and 48; Tin and Luce, *The Glass Palace Chronicle*, p. 114. Alaungsithu was a great warrior and traveller.

[3] A fuller account of the Sanskrit drama and the epics is given in chap. ii.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

2. Folk Feasts and Spirit Dances

According to legend, the Sanskrit drama was created in the Silver Age to cheer up the people, who were no longer happy as they were in the Golden Age; the Japanese drama was first used by the gods to beguile the sun-goddess to reappear; and the Chinese drama came into being as the result of the Emperor Yuen Tsaung ordering, in the eighth century after Christ, a group of children to be trained to sing the various deeds of the great national heroes before his consort, in appreciation of her love for him.[1] The Burmese, however, have no such legends, and the origins of their drama were in the religious *Nikāyathān*. But before considering those Burmese miracle plays, perhaps it will not be out of place to give an account of the various folk feasts and spirit dances, which have in them elements essentially dramatic, and which gave some idea of the dramatic to the people and paved a way for the coming of the religious pageants and plays.

Folk feasts can be divided into two classes, those directly connected with Buddhism and those which are not. The Buddhist feasts occur on fixed dates and are celebrated all over the country. Of those, two are especially interesting, the feast of the Full Moon of the month of Tazaungmôn (which occurs in November) and the feast of the New Year (in April). Though the Full Moon of Tazaungmôn is an important Buddhist festival now, it is extremely probable that it was an important feast-day even before the introduction of Buddhism.[2] Special celebrations connected with the date have two distinct elements, the element of mimicry and the element of foolery. On that day, in the villages men dress themselves as animals, wearing appropriate masks, and dance through the village. The animal most commonly imitated is a sort of unicorn known to myth only. The desire to mimic animals probably came before the desire to mimic spirits, and I think the mimicry of animals, such as that we see in these celebrations, was the earliest attempt at the dramatic by the Burmese. Probably the mimicry of animals by men resulted in the presentation of animal puppet shows. In a Burmese puppet show, before the play begins, different animals come out one by

[1] A. B. Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama*; F. A. Lombard, *Japanese Drama*; A. E. Zucker, *Chinese Theatre*.

[2] Some Buddhist festivals in Burma probably are of pre-Buddhist origins (cf. the English Christmas which has many elements derived from pre-Christian times). At least the special celebrations of Tazaungmôn described here are almost certainly pre-Buddhist.

On this great national epic were founded many plays. For
538 example, the thirteen Trivandrum plays commonly attributed to the
536* authorship of Bhasa contain two based on the *Ramayana*. The date of the plays is generally accepted as the second or third century after Christ.

2. The Siamese Court Play of *Rama*

177 From about the third century after Christ, the great Hindu expan-
175 sion overseas began in earnest, and as a result many Hindu kingdoms
● 101 were founded in Indo-China, Malaya, Java, and the surrounding regions. Before that time, very probably there was at least some intercourse between India and those regions, and may be Buddhism was not unknown in the regions mentioned. But by the third century A.D. Buddhism had completely disappeared in them, except for very faint traces remaining in Burma. In India itself, Buddhism was on the wane and Brahmanism was in the ascendant. Therefore when the merchants of Northern India spread a new culture in Indo-China and
[538] the surrounding regions, the culture was distinctly Hindu. The Indians took with them their religious epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Though both came to be very well known, the former was perhaps the more popular, probably because it was more finished artistically. Sanskrit plays were also no doubt introduced. The Hindu influence reached its height about the fourth and fifth centuries—in the third century Bhasa was composing his plays, and Kalidasa, the greatest of Hindu-Sanskrit dramatists lived about the year 400. Hindu poems and romances must also have been brought into the newly-founded kingdoms and trading centres.

177 The intensity of the new influence varied in the regions. Burma
101 was nearest and directly on the route from India. But probably
174 there was already a strong native civilization, and Hindu culture failed to take root. Along the coast, however, at Thaton, there was quite a strong outpost of Hindu culture, but even there the Hindu influence was quite negligible compared with regions farther east. In Cambodia the new culture was especially favoured, and in Java, Sumatra and the Malay peninsula, it took deep root. In Siam, however, the intensity was much less. In the narrow circle of the court the Hindu influence was strong, but the people were quite untouched by it. The chief reason was very probably the continuous, peaceful invasion by people from the north, the Shans, or at least the forefathers of the modern Shans. According to some scholars, they were Buddhists, which is not unlikely as Buddhism, in a modified form,

[i.e., the Ramayana -- ANALYST]

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

was prevailing in China and Tibet by about the third century A.D. In any case, the ever-increasing population, alien to Hindu culture, must have acted against the intensity of the Hindu influence. Moreover, Siam was one of the earliest converts from Hinduism to Buddhism which, especially after the great Buddhist missionary, Buddhagosa, who lived in the fifth century, was ousting Brahmanism in Indo-China. At the Siamese court, however, the Hindu tradition was very strong, and remained so even when the king and his courtiers had become Buddhists.

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In Siam, as in the neighbouring regions, learning did not reach the people for a long time even though it flourished at the court. The Hindu tradition was not strong enough to prevent the courtiers from creating a native literature. Buddhism prevented the courtiers from looking upon the Hindu learning with a conservatism that would not have allowed imitations. In Cambodia and elsewhere native ideas could never shake off the dominance of Hindu culture, and no native literature could come into being until quite modern times. Moreover, the very fact that the Hindu tradition was strong prevented the survival of Sanskrit literature in those regions, for once the tradition was broken, only chaos resulted. To make it clear, I will take the Java shadow-play. Sanskrit dramatic representation gave rise to the Java shadow-play. Therefore, one would expect Java to preserve a Hindu dramatic literature to herself and to the world. But it failed to do so. The shadow-play of Java is interesting as a special kind of dramatic performance, and not as dramatic literature. The stories that are presented on the shadow-stage in Java are taken mostly from the Hindu epics, but they have very little dramatic structure. Yet originally they must have been developed Sanskrit plays. Of course, to begin with, the Sanskrit shadow-plays themselves were slight in structure, but by no means so crude as the Javanese ones. The Hindu tradition was so strong that once it was destroyed, not only did the Hindu drama in Java decay and disappear, but a native drama in a developed form failed to appear. Stories from Hindu sources as well as stories from native history and mythology are still shown on the Java shadow-stage, but the plays are all formless and crude. In Cambodia, where the Hindu tradition was indeed very strong and lasted much longer, some remnants of the developed Sanskrit drama are preserved, but the tradition was so strong that no native element could enter it. There, up to the present day, a State theatre, with a special minister

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21: Htin Aung B-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

of State, presents the *Ramayana*, and less frequently that play which the Burmese calls the *Eenaung*.[1] Both are remnants of Sanskrit plays no doubt introduced by the early Hindu kings. Throughout the centuries, the two plays have been regularly presented with the full patronage of the king and all the splendour at his command. It is almost a ritual. During the intervening centuries, no fresh incentive had come from India, and no new element, no native element, was allowed to enter it; the result was that the Cambodian *Ramayana* soon lost its freshness. Cambodia, therefore, not only has no native drama; it also failed to preserve for posterity good examples of Sanskrit dramatic literature.

To return to Siam. Even the courtiers did not look upon the Hindu tradition with too much awe and conservatism. They recognised and retained the vital elements of Hindu culture as far as possible so as not to clash with native and Buddhistic elements. The results of such special circumstances are best seen in Siamese literature. The court encouraged and the courtiers produced romances based on and in imitation of Sanskrit-Hindu romances. Native ideas, native tales, and native mythology were introduced into works modelled on Hindu literary works. In drama, the Siamese did not produce native plays, and they retained the *Ramayana* as a play. But they introduced new ideas and kept alive the old. In dramatic literature, as in all other matters, the Siamese had to reject all that was contrary to Buddhism, and some were retained only after much alteration to suit new needs. A consideration of the Siamese play of *Rama* shows clearly the above facts.

The epic tradition was very strong in India and it prevented Sanskrit drama from rising to still greater heights. In the new Hindu regions of Indo-China and the Malay Archipelago epic tradition was equally strong, if not stronger. In India the Sanskrit drama was shackled by the epic tradition; in the new regions the drama was very probably entirely subordinated to the epic. The dramatic performances in Cambodia, in Siam, in Java, before modern influences came in, were based mostly on the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana*. Perhaps it is legitimate to assume that the Sanskrit plays introduced into the new Hindu kingdoms were mostly those based on the epics: mostly, but not all. For the *Eenaung*, which is very probably from Hindu-Sanskrit sources, tells a story unconnected with the two epics.

[1] This is explained in the next section.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

101 536* 538

The *Ramayana* was probably the more popular; it is likely then that plays based on that epic were more numerous. The Siamese *Rama* play seems to prove the above facts.

The Siamese *Rama* play is based on the epic. But much had to be altered, much had to be rejected. Rama was taken to be a Future-Buddha; this alteration suggested itself, no doubt, by the existence of the Birth Story, the *Dasaratha Jataka* which must have been known in Siam after Buddhism had taken root (and which, as already stated, probably existed before the epic). Rama was destined to be a Buddha soon, otherwise he was an ordinary mortal; he was of no divine birth, and all the supernatural help he had was his magic bow. In the original, the supernatural was connected with the Hindu religion and Hindu gods. The Siamese had to reject all those; the supernatural in the Siamese play became just simple magic or help by the Siamese equivalent of the Burmese *nats* who are supposed to help or hinder human beings just as ordinary mortals help or hinder each other; the Hindu gods of the epic were religious, whereas the Siamese supernatural beings in their play were quite independent of religion in their acts and behaviour. In the Hindu epic, the gods were behind the scenes, planning the destiny of mortals, but such a conception was entirely rejected by the Siamese. Therefore, whereas the Hindu *Ramayana* was a religious epic, the Siamese play became merely a dramatized *Jataka* Birth Story.

The Siamese play of *Rama*, dramatizing the epic, was influenced also by the Sanskrit plays themselves founded on the epic. Whether non-Rama Sanskrit plays had any direct influence is uncertain; it would be natural to suppose that they might have had some influence, but it was probably very slight. The play as a whole lacks unity and dramatic structure, but taken separately, each scene is quite dramatic. That dramatic element was doubtless borrowed from the finished Sanskrit plays. The character of the villain, the demon king, was borrowed direct from the Sanskrit *Rama* plays. In the epic, he was a worthy rival of the hero in many ways, but in the Siamese play he became merely a boastful villain, who could never rival the hero. The summing up of the character of the demon king in the plays of the great Sanskrit dramatist, Bhasa, by Dr Keith—that he 'was nothing more than a *miles gloriosus* if not comic'—can be applied to the Siamese demon. The Sanskrit drama aimed at producing sentiment, but it would not allow a division of sentiment. As Dr Keith says: 'It would not allow the enemy of the hero to rival him

21: Htin Aung · E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

101 536* 539 in any degree; nothing is more striking than the failure to realize the possibility of a great dramatic creation presented by the character of Ravana as the rival of Rama for Sita's love. Ravana varies in the hands of the dramatists, but all tend to reduce him to the status of a boastful and rather stupid villain, who is inferior at every point to his rival.' Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the Siamese Ravana stepped straight out of the Sanskrit drama.'

However, the interest was more in the epic than in the plays founded on the epic. The Siamese aimed at presenting the epic scene by scene. In the Sanskrit plays, the whole story was not given, only some scenes being taken, as there were limits to the length of a Sanskrit play. A knowledge of the story was assumed in the audience. As a result, in the Sanskrit plays, we have description rather than action. But it was different with the Siamese. The audience as a whole, composed not only of courtiers, but also of common people who were often admitted to a State or palace performance, did not know the story so well as a Hindu audience. Therefore, action rather than description was given in the presentation of the story. The Siamese play came to have many elements comparable to those existing in the Indian open-air performance of the epic, the *Rama Lila*, where the whole epic is presented scene by scene (the *Rama Lila*, though still performed at the present day in India, is very ancient). But the Siamese play is much more developed drama, for there is good dramatic construction in the individual scenes. The Siamese had also to modify the story because they wanted to make the action presentable on the stage. Therefore, they rejected the fight with the vulture king, and they made Ravana much more like an ordinary human being. The demon king was allowed to have ten heads (they could be represented by a series of masks on the head); but he was no longer a very tall giant. All the demons were turned into ordinary mortals as far as stature was concerned. In a *Rama Lila* performance, the battle between the demons and Rama is presented by means of tall, grotesque figures made of wood and paper. In the Siamese performance, as in the Sanskrit plays, living actors took the parts of the demons. The *Rama Lila* is primitive and crude; the Siamese play, thanks to the influence of the Sanskrit drama and native genius, became quite developed artistically. Though following the epic, the Siamese play, unlike the *Rama Lila*, was not bound to follow it blindly.

These points, and also some others, will perhaps be made clearer

21: Htin Aung B-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

by a consideration of the story of the Siamese play. It begins with Rama's father holding court, and information regarding the sons of the king, etc. is given by way of introduction. Then the scene shifts to Sita's court where Rama wins her after beating all other princely suitors by his strength and prowess with the bow. The princess is brought to Rama's palace, and the king calls his ministers and announces his intention of appointing Rama as heir. The junior queen enters and asks for the fulfilment of a boon promised to her by the king when she nursed him back to health. She now asks for the appointment of her own son, Bharata, as heir. The king tries to protest, but the queen remains stubborn. Rama comes and begs his father to keep the promise. So the younger son is appointed. The king, however, suggests to Rama that he should go into exile, pointing out the danger to the State and to Rama himself if he remains in the country. Rama agrees to leave the kingdom for fourteen years, and begs his father to look after Sita, who, however, refuses to stay behind. Lakshmana, the younger brother of Rama, begs leave to accompany his brother. Rama argues with Sita and his brother to make them stay behind, but it is in vain. So the three bid farewell to the king, and amidst the wailing of the courtiers, they leave. It will be noticed that the queen does not ask that Rama should be exiled, as in the epic. In the next scene, a Malay king, monarch of a neighbouring kingdom, is holding court, when a messenger enters and announces the arrival of two princes and a princess, attended by only two or three retainers. The king gives orders for them to be invited, and on learning the identity of the strangers and the reason of their journey, the king offers his throne to Rama, who, however, refuses to accept it. The king then begs Rama to rest a few days, to which request the latter agrees. In the next scene, the ministers in Rama's palace are begging Bharata to take the throne, but he refuses to do so as long as Rama is alive. In the next scene, a messenger is refused admission to the palace of the Malay king by an attendant of Rama, who has been appointed to guard the palace gates. Blinded by conceit, the guard brags to the messenger and a humorous conversation follows until the guard recognizes the messenger as an attendant on Bharata, who is announced as waiting at the city gates. In the next scene, Rama refuses to return to his kingdom until the promised fourteen years have elapsed, and Bharata sadly returns home with Rama's sandals. Rama bids farewell to the Malay king, and amidst the homage and wailing of the court, Rama,

21: Htin Aung . E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

101 536* 538 Sita and Lakshmana leave for the forest. The Malay king is a Siamese invention. Though the Burmese translation terms him the Malay king, it is difficult to say where the kingdom was supposed to be as the Burmese call not only Malays but Cambodians and Javanese 'Malay'. There are three explanations of the introduction of the Malay king's court into the play. First, it is probably an acknowledgement of the indebtedness of the Siamese to the neighbouring regions for the story of Rama. Second, the Siamese wanted to lay the scene of the story as near Siam as possible. Third, the Siamese play is essentially a court play, dealing with court-inmates, and with scenes mostly laid at court; the court of the Malay king gives yet another court scene. The next scene is the court of the demon king and we understand that the forest is his domain. In this scene, the sister of the demon king tries to make love to the two brothers but she is not successful. It is not a comic scene as in the *Rama Lila*, and no nose is cut off. She returns to her brother, who at first refuses to interfere with Rama, but agrees to do so when he learns that Sita is with Rama. We are told that the demon king had been an unsuccessful applicant for the hand of Sita before her marriage. The sister turns herself into a doe and Rama is pressed to give chase to it by Sita. Rama, full of evil forebodings, marks on the ground a circle around Sita, praying that no evil being should enter the circle. The doe is shot and as she lies dying, she shouts: 'Lakshmana, help!' Sita begs Lakshmana to go to Rama's help, in spite of the strict command given to him not to leave Sita's side. The demon king now appears, but he cannot enter the magic circle. He is in the guise of a hermit, and as he preaches and begs for food, Sita gradually comes out of the circle. He makes advances, but is unsuccessful. He then seizes Sita and flies away in his flying carriage. The death of the demon king's sister is moving and strikes in a note of pathos, for she dies by the hand of the one she loves. The incident of the magic circle is very dramatic, and the idea of such a circle is borrowed from folklore common both to the Siamese and the Burmese. Rama and his brother then go in search of Sita, and after much wandering, they fall asleep in each other's arms under a tree. Sugriva, the deposed king of the monkeys, is on the tree, and in a soliloquy, he admires the love for each other of the brothers, and regrets that his own brother should be so heartless. He drops a tear which falls on the sleeping princes, who are awakened by it. Rama aims an arrow at the monkey, who begs for mercy and tells

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1957 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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his tale. This meeting of Rama and the monkey king is more dramatic than that described in the epic. In the epic, a spirit advises Rama to seek the monkey king, whereas in the Siamese play the meeeting is accidental and more plausible. Rama agrees to help Sugriva. The next scene is again a court scene—the court of the usurping monkey-brother. A battle follows soon after, in which the usurper is killed, to the great sorrow of his queen, who, however, returns to the arms of her first and rightful husband. Sugriva then sends Hanumat as a spy to the demon king. Hanumat succeeds in learning Sita's whereabouts and then opens the gates of the demon city for Rama and his army of monkeys to enter. There is a great fight and the demon king is slain. Rama refuses to take back Sita, who, however, proves her purity by an ordeal by fire. They are crowned king and queen on their return to Rama's own city. The happy ending was perhaps just to please the happy throng who witnessed the play in holiday mood, or perhaps it was borrowed from Sanskrit plays. The Sanskrit dramatist aimed at harmony in every way, and to him, a happy ending was the only ending possible; virtue must be rewarded and lovers must be united. In the Sanskrit plays based on the epic, Sita is always restored to Rama, thereby rejecting the more artistic separation after vindication. The Siamese play and the Sanskrit plays were the productions of courts where polygamy prevailed and women had very little say in the matter. If Rama took back Sita, all was well. The court could not see, or refused to see, that Rama did not deserve Sita after all; after various sufferings, after her faithfulness to Rama, after a captivity against her will, Rama was cruel enough to denounce her as impure.

Though the Siamese *Rama* had many characteristics of a proper play, it had many elements of the kind which we find in the Elizabethan masque. The actors and actresses wore gorgeous dress. Though the majority of the performers were professionals, many lords and ladies probably took part often, for at the Burmese court exiled members of the Siamese nobility took part in the earlier presentations of the play, but it may be that they had to do so as teachers of the new art of court dramatic performance. Music and song were essentially connected with the play, and all the characters danced. There was no scenery, and change of scene was denoted (apart from references in the dialogue) either by the characters leaving the stage, or when some of the characters were supposed to be going on a journey, the actual journey was bridged over by the orchestra playing while the characters

Zi: Htin Aung B-6 (ca. 1930) 1987 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

101 536 538 walked up and down the stage—a dramatic practice which was taken from the Siamese and used on the Burmese stage. The language was the language of the court, artificial, but not so removed from reality as to prevent it from being understood by the lowest classes. The play was mostly in verse. The prose was poetic and elegant except in comic scenes.

[175] When the Burmese conquered Siam in 1767, they were able to take the play back with them for various reasons. The play was to both nations a *Jataka* story. The manners and the language of the Siamese court, as depicted in the play, were similar in many ways to those of the Burmese court. The mythology was common to both nations. The play was easy of reproduction at the Burmese court because of the many characteristics common to both countries, and because the captive and exiled members of the Siamese nobility at the Burmese court were ready and willing to help not only because they were anxious to teach the new art to their conquerors, but also because they missed an entertainment to which they had been accustomed for generations.

3. The *Rama* Play at the Burmese Court

175 669 727 The age that followed the conquest of Siam in 1767 was one of triumph. In 1752 the Burmese Empire had been destroyed by the Talaings, and the conquerors were ruthlessly putting into practice their policy of stopping the continual war between Burmese and Talaing by exterminating the Burmese as a race. In the same year, however, a humble villager arose, rallied the Burmese around him, with the result that five years later the mighty Talaing Empire was destroyed and the Talaings as a race disappeared from Burma. The obscure villager became the great Alaungpaya, founder of the famous dynasty that bore his name. He tried to conquer Siam, but died when victory was in sight. His son, Hsinbyushin, carried on the war, and continued the extension of the Empire. Manipur was soon conquered, and in 1767 Siam was completely crushed and its capital destroyed. The Siamese court was taken captive to the Burmese capital. The weary army was given no rest, however, for the Chinese had invaded Burma. From 1765 to 1769, the Chinese carried on a serious campaign against Burma. There were four distinct invasions, but each was repulsed. In 1769, the Chinese defeat was complete. Of that age of triumph, Harvey says:

> The victory [against the Chinese], coming as it did on top of a

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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renown, whose literary works were worthy rivals in popularity to those of Myawaddi.[1] The native court plays were so popular that even *Rama* soon fell under their sway. Through their influence, the tradition of rigidly following the Siamese version was broken and destroyed, and adaptations of *Rama* in the style of *Eenaung* came to be presented at the Burmese court.

5. The Court Drama Reaches the People

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The latter half of Bodawpaya's reign saw the court drama becoming national instead of being confined to the narrow limits of the palace. The national interest in the drama was now so great that the king had to create a new ministry, that of the stage. The new minister greatly developed the puppet-show, which is described in a later chapter. The drama became a regular entertainment at the court, and a dramatic performance in the palace came to be looked upon as a semi-State function. Not only was the drama now looked upon as a national entertainment at the court, but the court drama itself was being spread all over the country through governors and administrative officials imitating the court and holding little dramatic performances of their own. The greatest gift the court performances gave to the acting profession was to raise its status. The actors were still looked upon with prejudice as being nothing more than beggars, but they were no longer considered as being only a little better than rogues and vagabonds. Many travelling companies also came to be looked upon with less disfavour, for they would style themselves 'the King's actors' or 'those who had acted before such-and-such a minister on such-and-such an occasion'. For their ability many actors were given rewards of money and some sort of decoration, which might be a medal or a special dress, and these the actors would wear during their performances with great pride. The Burmese actors of the period were very much in the same position as those acting companies

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[1] The fact that the Lady Khin Sôn was the rival of Myawaddi in the literary circles of the court, reflects the difference in character, as far as women were concerned, between the Burmese and most other oriental courts. Burmese women have enjoyed equal rights with men from prehistoric times: 'when greater races bound the feet or veiled the faces of their women, or doubted if she had a soul, the Burmese held her free and enthroned her as chieftainess and queen' (Harvey). Perhaps this difference in the atmosphere of the court had much to do with the sympathetic portrayal of women by Myawaddi in his *Eenaung*. In India, the fact that women were given an inferior social position is reflected in the absence of Sanskrit plays by women.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Upper Burma
Lower Burma2

So for about a decade after the death of U Pon Nya, the drama decayed and was left entirely in the hands of actors. And in Upper Burma, the real home of the drama, it never recovered from their influence. True, some scholars in the quiet of a monastery wrote many a play, retelling a religious story, but their plays were never meant to be presented on the stage, nor did they follow the established dramatic traditions. They were merely scholarly exercises, and though many contained masterly prose and poetry, they did not really belong to the true drama, for they were plays only in name.[1] In Lower Burma, however, scholars again assumed control of the drama, though they had to comply with the desires of the actors in many matters. The change in the venue of Burmese drama is significant. Rangoon, the capital of British Burma, and not Mandalay, the national capital, was now the centre of dramatic development. The reasons for the change were many. The court was the centre of political intrigues and the drama could no longer look to it for development. Upper Burma was in a hopeless condition, and it never recovered until some years after the completion of the British conquest in 1886. In Lower Burma, on the other hand, by about 1875, the benefits of a developed commerce were seen, and after a few years of transition, prosperity was returning. There was peace and stability of government. The spirit of the people in Lower Burma was no longer of anxiety and despair. But it was not one of great serenity, for they realised that Upper Burma would soon fall into British hands, and the Burmese would never again have a kingdom of their own. There was intense regret, and the Burmese Crown, from which the past greatness of the nation had flowed, came to be looked upon with great sentimentality. True, the court in Upper Burma was in a disgraceful condition, especially since the death of Mindon and the accession of his son, Theebaw (1875–86), but that very deterioration, by contrast, enhanced the sentimental respect for the past glories of the throne. The drama therefore was used to present scenes of great splendour, in which court manners and customs were shown to an audience who, having come under an alien rule since 1824, knew their national court only from hearsay. That was why sentimentality and spectacle continued to dominate the drama, even though conditions had improved enough

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[1] Some plays of this type, printed in Lower Burma, are preserved in the British Museum, e.g. *Thamana-thana* and *Maha Zanaka*, both by monks and founded on U Awbatha's *Jatakas* of the same names. Many of these plays are still obtainable in Burma. [INF]

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1957 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

536* 538 178 popularity of the novel which discouraged the people from reading the once-famous plays and caused the 'dead' drama to be forgotten.

536* Yet the dramatic performances were popular everywhere, and in the circumstances, 'matinee idols' adored by their admirers soon appeared. These popular actors and actresses were admired purely for their dancing and singing. The result was to put the play yet further into the background. When a performance started, the audience clamoured for their favourite actor or actress, and during scenes in which he or she did not appear, it went to sleep. Three of these popular 'stars' became exceptionally famous; Aungbala, Sein Kadon, and Po Sein.[1] When Aungbala died in 1910, his funeral at Mandalay was similar in nature and incident to that of Rudolph Valentino, the cinema actor. These three led famous troupes of their own and toured the country, which on the whole tended to lower even further the dramatic performances in artistic value. For example, Sein Kadon danced with little electric bulbs all over his dress, and Po Sein had two English ex-soldiers with rifles standing motionless on each side of the stage whenever he appeared. There is no denying that there had been threats against his life by supporters of rival troupes, but I do not think that the rifles were quite necessary. In any case, the fact that he was guarded by two live English ex-soldiers impressed the audience, increased his prestige, and enhanced the theatrical effect. Such 'playing to the gallery' by the actors further prevented the possibility of any revival of [559] scholarly interest in the dramatic performance. Moreover, as rival supporters spread tales of immorality and bad conduct among those actors whom they did not favour, the prejudice against the profession increased in intensity among the more conservative Burmese. And by about 1900, the performances could claim at the most only a distant relationship with the drama of U Kyin U and U Pon Nya.

2. The English Drama in Burma

536* 101 If we put the Sanskrit, Elizabethan, and Burmese dramas side by side, we find that the Elizabethan and Burmese have much in common, both differing greatly from the Sanskrit.[2] Of the Sanskrit drama Dr A. B. Keith says:

[1] Po Sein was decorated later by the Government. See chap. viii.

[2] Apart, of course, from the fact that the Sanskrit drama is classical in language and in age.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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(*a*) 'The drama bears . . . essential traces of its connexion with the Brahmins. They were idealist in outlook, capable of large generalizations, but regardless of accuracy in detail, and to create a realistic drama was wholly incompatible with their temperament. The accurate delineation of facts or character was to them nothing; they aimed at the creation in the mind of the audience of sentiment, and what was necessary for this end was all that was attempted.'

'Kalidasa, greatest of Indian dramatists, experiences no uneasiness at the structure of life or the working of the world. He accepts without question or discontent the fabric of Indian society.'

'Admirable as is Kalidasa's work, it would be unjust to ignore the fact that in his dramas . . . he shows no interest in the great problems of life and destiny.'

'Fascinating and exquisite as is the *Çakuntala*, it moves in a narrow world, removed far from the cruelty of real life, and it neither seeks answer, nor does it solve, the riddles of life.'

(*b*) 'Idealist as it is, the spirit of the drama declines to permit of a division of sentiment; it will not allow the enemy of the hero to rival him in any degree . . . Equally effectively the drama banishes from the possibilities the conception of a struggle of conscience in the mind of the hero or the heroine; if this were represented, it would create a similar struggle in the mind of the audience, and destroy the unity and purity of the sentiment, which is the part of the drama to generate.

(*c*) 'The plot is a secondary element in the drama in its highest form, the heroic play or *Nataka*. To complicate it would divert the mind from emotion to intellectual interest, and affect injuriously the production of sentiment.'

'To the Brahmin ideal individuality has no appeal . . . and indifference to individuality necessarily meant indifference to action, and therefore to plot.'

Therefore, to realize the essential difference of Burmese drama from the Sanskrit, one has but to remember: (*a*) the realism in U Pon Nya and some element of it in U Kyin U, their character studies, the connexion between their plays and the political problems of their times, U Pon Nya's interest in the destiny that controlled the action in *Wiseya*; (*b*) U Kyin U's sympathy with Parpahein, Daywagonban, and Kaywut the villains, U Pon Nya's interest in the struggle in the mind of the water-seller; and (*c*) the dramatic doctrine that the essence of technique was in the smooth, logical, and clear unfolding of the plot. Though much lower in achievement, Burmese drama is similar in nature and in aim to the Elizabethan drama, and its development from religious 'miracle' to 'interlude', the influence of the Siamese-modified classical Sanskrit drama, the interest of a court composed of learned men of action, the

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

536* blending together of the 'people's drama' and the court drama in the hands of U Kyin U, the continuation and fuller achievement of his aims and ideals in U Pon Nya, and the decadence have their counterparts in the history of the Elizabethan drama. Yet whereas the Elizabethan drama as represented by Shakespeare has influenced the remnants of the Sanskrit drama to give birth to a new and vigorous national drama in India, it has failed to confer such a benefit on Burma.

Although Kalidasa flourished long before decadence set in, by the tenth century A.D. in the Sanskrit drama, remnants of it lived on, and still live on, in India. The best plays of Kalidasa and other classical dramatists were often performed right through the centuries to the present day, though with 'popular' modifications. In Bengal, the *Rama Lila*, an open-air performance of the *Rama* legend, was the chief dramatic entertainment until recent times. Once the study of English institutions and literature had taken root and spread all over India, Shakespeare was not only translated and read, but also put on the stage, with modifications to meet native and 'popular' tastes.[1] Once Shakespeare had been successfully introduced, other dramatists followed as a matter of course, and the English drama began to influence the Indian stage.[2] And in Bengal, helped perhaps by the awakening of a national consciousness somewhat comparable to that which gave Ireland the Abbey Theatre, a new and intensely living drama came to be well established by the end of the nineteenth century.[3]

536* 177 In Burma the 'old' drama was not preserved on the native stage by professional actors. When the first Burmese translations of Shakespeare—of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*—appeared in a Burmese magazine in 1912, the actors had so far removed themselves from the drama and the scholars, that presentation of the translations on the stage was never thought of, and was perhaps impossible. The great disservice the actors did to Burmese dramatic development was the dismissal from their theatre of the drama that had given them their occupation, for had they retained but some remnants of the great plays of U Kyin U and U Pon Nya, or even the decadent ones, English drama could have influenced those remnants and created a new drama. Without a theatre, the translated Shakespearian drama

[1] C. J. Sisson, *Shakespeare in India.*
[2] R. K. Yajnik, *The Indian Theatre.*
[3] Gubatilakarta: *Bengalee Drama.*

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1980) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

175 536* the same. Therefore after the minister's innovation, the puppet show was actually a combination of two different things, the old puppet show as seen in the animal puppets coming out to dance, and the new puppet play. To many people it must have seemed that the minister did not really introduce any new thing, but only lengthened and made more elaborate that part of the show devoted to the prince ●[101] and princess. It should be remembered that the Burmese had no puppet drama. In India, in Java, in Siam, in Bali, and in Turkey, there was an actual puppet drama, but in Burma the puppet show was entirely dependent for its plays on the drama of living actors. The minister imposed two restrictions on the puppet show. [656] First, the plays presented by puppets must either be founded on the *Jatakas*, or on the great events in the nation's history. Second, the dress, manners, and customs of the king and his court presented on the puppet stage should be correct in every detail.

536* 463 The innovations of the able minister resulted in the rise of a new class of puppet show-men. They were mostly drawn from the ranks of the professional actors, but they were of proved ability and experience, and had to serve at least some months of apprenticeship. The show-men were never looked down upon, and the living actors themselves held them in respect. The puppet show-men were very conservative. State control ended with the death of the minister, perhaps because his successors were not so able; but the show-men kept their stage exactly the same as it was in the time of the minister, except that they presented the plays of U Kyin U, most of which were founded neither on the *Jatakas* nor on historical events. During the decadent period, the puppets stuck to the 'old' plays, and introduced no innovations either in stage-craft or in dramatic 536* technique. The annexation by the British in 1886 was disastrous 178 to the puppet show, for, unlike the living actors, the puppets were almost totally dependent on court patronage. When the country became peaceful again by about 1885, the puppet show-men made gallant attempts to revive their shows, and all over Burma they gave performances. But the show belonged to a dead past, and the conservatism of the show-men would not allow the introduction of anything new. The old show-men died out, and there were not many new-comers, for the profession demanded a term of apprenticeship and its conservatism did not suit the young men, products of the changed conditions. The result was that the puppet troupes gradually disappeared. In 1921, when a puppet performance was given at

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

Pegu, many English officials asked to be my father's guests, for although they had been some years in Burma and heard so much of the puppet show, they had never been able to find one. In 1929, on inquiry, I found that there was not one puppet troupe in Lower Burma, though there were two in Upper Burma; of these, only one was giving performances occasionally, the members of the other being content to earn their living by some other means.

Before considering the probable history of the puppet show before the time of Bodawpaya, it is necessary to give an account of the puppet-shadow show of the east. The home of the puppet show was India. Pischel in *The Home of the Puppet Stage* even contends that the Sanskrit shadow drama preceded the drama proper, but that theory is not accepted by Dr Keith and other scholars. From India, with Hindu expansion overseas, the puppet-shadow show spread, together with the epics and the drama, to Malaya and the East Indies. In Java it found a permanent home, and there shadow drama is still very popular. From Java it spread to Siam and other countries of Indo-China, to Persia, Turkey, Arabia and Japan. Perhaps it even spread to Europe; at least the English Punch is a direct descendant of the Turkish puppet Karageuz, who himself was a descendant of the Sanskrit puppet Vidusaka. To give an idea of the puppet-shadow show, I will give a description of a Java shadow performance.

As 'stage' there is a huge curtain with a light behind it. The puppets are put between the light and the curtain, on which their shadows are thrown. 'The light shines through the transparent material of which his (the puppet's) many-coloured garments are made. His shadow on the curtain glows with such bright hues within the framework of dark shells that he looks like a figure in stained glass. . . . In the middle of the huge curtain is seen a fantastic vine with interlacing branches. Monkeys and birds climb on it, and beneath it two grim guards stand watch. When the play begins, the strange shadow tree vanishes. The stage manager is the *Dalang*. He sits on a mat and gives the play.[1] Back of him is the orchestra to accompany the explanations of the *Dalang*. Whenever a new figure enters the orchestra plays. The men in the audience are allowed to sit on the right of the *Dalang* and see the actual puppets perform, and the children sit at the *Dalang's* left hand. But the women are not permitted to see the real puppets act. They see only the shadows on the

[1] i.e. he recites the words of the play.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

536* 101 screen. The transparent sticks (tied to the side of the figures) that guide the actors do not show on the screen.'[1] The shadow shows of other countries are essentially the same as in Java, except that (1) 'the fantastic vine' is not found anywhere else, (2) the audience, men and women, see only the shadows, and (3) the faces are not distorted as in Java; but this is because with the Mohammedan conquest, the Javanese had to get over the religious difficulty. The Mohammedan religion does not allow the reproduction of the human form in any way, and therefore the Javanese puppets came to have distorted bird-like profiles, and the Turkish puppets were held high enough for the heads of their shadows to be a little bit cut off, so that it could not be said that they were real reproductions of the human form. In Bali and in Siam, where the old Sanskrit-Hindu culture has remained up to the present day, the faces of the puppets are human.

How far was the Burmese puppet show under the influence of the shadow play? The question must be answered with reference to its history only before Bodawpaya, as it is obvious that after his time the show could not be and was not under any foreign influence.

That there was no direct influence of the Sanskrit and East-Indian shadow drama is certain because (1) a shadow show of any sort has never been known to the Burmese, and (2) the introduction of anything directly connected with the shadow show would bring with it semi-Sanskrit plays founded on the epics, upon which the East-Indian shadow drama was dependent, but as we have seen, no such plays were ever brought into Burma. In this connexion Sir William Ridgeway's theory that the puppets first became known to the Burmese when the 'Indian historical plays' were introduced, falls to the ground as no such plays were ever introduced. And (3) although a descendant of the Sanskrit puppet Vidusaka, whether he be called Punch or Karageuz or by some other name, is found in the East Indies, Turkey, China and other countries where the shadow drama had spread, there is no such puppet in Burma.

536* 101 177 The question whether there was any indirect influence at all is difficult to answer, and I dare not venture to express a definite opinion. I give below evidence for and against the possibility of such indirect influence. The balance of probability would perhaps seem to indicate that the Burmese obtained some idea of their puppet show from the shadow puppets of their neighbouring countries. Just as the decadent actors could borrow some ideas of European stage-craft

[1] Madge Anderson, *The Heroes of the Puppet Stage*.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

without ever knowing or caring for the European drama itself, the Burmese may have borrowed their puppets and puppet stage-craft, without ever caring for the shadow drama itself. Such borrowings were possible although the shadow drama itself never reached Burma, for Burmese trading or raiding expeditions were in continuous contact with Siam, and to a lesser extent with Malaya and the East Indies. 536 101 177

1. (*a*) The Burmese puppets are worked in delicate detail, and are similar in this and other respects to the Javanese and Siamese figures.

(*b*) But the Burmese puppets are worked by strings, whereas most other eastern puppets are moved by sticks from below. However, some puppets of India and China are stringed.

2. (*a*) The Burmese puppet show-men make offerings to the spirits before a performance. Such offerings are also made in Java before the presentation of a shadow play.

(*b*) But, although the offerings are not made particularly to the thirty-seven *nats*, it may be that the puppet show-men, who consider their calling to be just a branch of the acting profession, are only following the custom of the living actors.

3. (*a*) The puppet show begins with dances by animals, which are perhaps reminiscent of the Javanese 'fantastic vine' with birds and monkeys on it. A monkey appears among the Burmese puppets. [825]

(*b*) But Burmese folk feasts occasioned mimicry of animals, and that practice may have influenced the puppet show. Moreover, the Burmese animal puppets consist, in addition to the monkey, of the tiger, the elephant, and the horse. The *zaugyee* has no counterpart in the Javanese show, and the Burmese show has no bird puppets.

4. (*a*) Burmese women are not admitted to membership of a puppet troupe, and are not allowed to step on the puppet stage, even when no actual performance is in progress. Is this reminiscent of the Java show, where women are not allowed to see the actual puppets perform? [462]

(*b*) But the practice may have been only an attempt by men to reserve the profession for themselves.

5. (*a*) An appropriate tune to identify a new animal puppet is played in Burma. This is perhaps akin to the Javanese practice of identifying a new figure that has entered by the orchestra playing a special tune. [533]

(*b*) But the practice of identifying a new scene (which is almost the same as identifying a new figure) by an appropriate tune has always existed in the performances of living actors, and the puppet show-men may have borrowed it.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

151

APPENDIX I

THE *RAMA* PLAY[1]

The following extracts from the *Rāmāyān of Valmiki*, *The Statue Play* attributed to Bhasa, and the Siamese-Burmese *Rama* illustrate

i. the difference between the demon-king of the epic and the demon-king of Sanskrit plays; and

ii. the indebtedness of the Siamese *Rama*, for its portrayal of the demon as a boastful villain, to the Sanskrit plays founded on the epic, rather than to the epic itself.

From THE RAMAYANA[2]

The DEMON *in the guise of a hermit praises the beauty of* SITA, *who is surprised and alarmed at this unusual behaviour. He now announces himself.*

With knitted brow and furious eye
The stranger made his fierce reply:
'In me, O fairest dame, behold,
The brother of the King of Gold,
The Lord of Ten Necks my title, named
Ravan, for might and valour famed.
Gods and Gandharva hosts I scare;
Snakes, spirits, birds that roam the air
Fly from my coming, wild with fear,
Trembling like men when Death is near.

. . .

What, O thou large-eyed dame, hast thou
To do with fallen Rama now,
From home and kingdom forced to fly
A wretched hermit soon to die?
Accept thy lover, nor refuse
The giant king who fondly woos.

[1] This play has been considered in chap. ii.

[2] Translation by R. T. H. Griffith, *The Rāmāyān of Valmiki*, reproduced by permission of Messrs E. J. Lazarus & Co., Benares.

[1] [see pp. 151 ff., cat. 116 -- Analyst]

9. Burmese and the Lolo Languages

●101 Burmese and the Lolo languages of southwestern China,
197 northern Tonkin and Siam, and the Shan States, constitute one of the largest single blocs in the Tibeto-Burman family (Burmish-Loloish). The center of dispersion for this group seems to have been southwestern China, whence have proceeded successive waves of migration to the south and east. The trail of the Burmese southward down the Irrawaddy valley is today marked by a series of tribes of Burmese stock, viz. Maru, Lashi, Atsi, Achang, Hpön. The Lolo movements southward and eastward have continued down to the present time, even in the face of strongly entrenched Thai populations. The process has been one of infiltration rather than of displacement, since these immigrant Lolo groups almost invariably constitute a depressed economic class under the control of their Chinese or Thai neighbors.

197 Burmese is a literary language of some antiquity (its inscriptions extend back to the 11th century), and hence is of great value in comparative Tibeto-Burman studies. The written forms, especially those in the inscriptions, contain many archaic features not found in Tibetan, but the modern spoken language has undergone extensive phonetic modification. The non-standard dialects, viz. Arakanese, Taungyo, Intha, Danu, and Tavoyan, in general tend to retain older forms. Hpön is transitional to the Maru group (supra), while the latter is again transitional to the Lolo languages. The

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197
[101] The linguistic bridge between Burmese and the Lolo languages is supplied by the Maru group of languages, spoken in the upper Irrawaddy valley. The Maru proper are found in the Myitkyina and Bhamo districts of Upper Burma, their true home being the valley and watershed of the Nmai Kha, or eastern tributary of the Irrawaddy (south of the Hung), while the closely affiliated Lashi and Atsi are found scattered all along the Burma-China frontier. Hpön is transitional between Burmese and Maru, to judge from what little we know of its two dialects (Megyaw and Samong), spoken by nearly extinct groups living in the defile of the Irrawaddy between Bhamo and Myitkyina. A few kinship terms are cited in our Hpön sources (Scott, Davies, LSI). Noteworthy are Megyaw ma-so cB, Samong a-so-ku; Megyaw pi-pi cSi, Samong a-pi-ku; Megyaw a-sa Ch, ai-sa D, i-sa ySb; and Megyaw a-yi ~ a-ye M (Samong a-ni).

Maru, Lashi, and Atsi are closely related languages or perhaps dialects of a single language. All three have been heavily influenced by Kachin, with whom they are often mistakenly grouped (as in Hanson). In Atsi this influence has been felt much more strongly, and hence the Atsi terminology is best examined apart from the Maru-Lashi system. Our material on the Maru group, which includes two dictionaries of Maru (Clerk, Abbey), some word-lists in the works of Scott and Davies, and tables of terms in the census report

601 conclusions can be drawn, despite the categorical equations in their kinship terminology.

Achang (Hotha Shan, Maingtha Shan), spoken in the Möng Hsa valley of the Southern Shan States, is a fourth language of Maru type. A few of its kinship terms have been recorded by Davies, Anderson, and Taylor (in the LSI). Achang is unusual in having preserved the Burmese root ní ySb, in the terms a-nyi yB, a-nyi a-nyo yo ySi (cf. i-nyo "woman, wife"). Be oSi (Davies, in Scott) belongs with Lashi pe, Maru pai, and a-mong B (Anderson) with either *mang or *mong. In contrast to the languages just examined, no Kachin loan-words appear in Achang, spoken south of the Kachin area. Some Shan loan-words may occur, however; note especially tsai oB, Shan pi-sai; sau-ke oSi, Shan s'au "young unmarried woman".

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197 The Southern Lolo languages, spoken in the Southern
601 Shan States, Laos, and Tonkin, are phonetically intermediate
● [101] between Burmese-Maru and the Northern Lolo languages of southwestern China. The best preserved of these languages are Phunoi, in the French Laos, and the closely related Pyen, in Kengtung State, but our knowledge of the kinship terms of these languages is incomplete (Phunoi has been recorded only by Roux, and Pyen only by Stirling, in Scott). Akha (Kas), which is spoken in the 5th Military District of the Laos and in Kengtung, has been recorded by Roux, Antisdel,

601 a two-day visit, and the bride returns again alone and remains with her parents until she becomes pregnant (Lunet de Lajonquiere, pp. 322 and sq.). This practice is also found among the Tai peoples of Tonkin (ibid.), from whom it may have been borrowed, yet it can well be interpreted along the lines suggested above. Writing of the same Lolo groups, Bonifacy observes that a man may earn his wife by working for his father-in-law and taking the family name (姓 tính) of the latter, or that he may obtain his wife without changing his name, and without paying for her, by supporting his aged parents-in-law.

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197 [101] The Northern Lolo languages fall into several large groups, viz. Lisu, a central bloc (Ahi, Nyi, Lolopho), a southeastern bloc (Chöko, Phupha), an eastern bloc (Ulu, Nasŏ), and the Independent Lolo dialects of Szuchuan. Of the above languages, Lisu, Ahi, and Nyi are fairly well known and Lolopho is somewhat less fully known, while the remaining languages have been recorded only in fragments. The general linguistic picture, however, is much clearer than in the case of the Southern Lolo languages, e.g. tonal equations have been worked out for Lisu, Ahi, and Nyi (in relation to Burmese). The bulk of the literature on the Lolo is entirely disproportionate to its value, largely because of the failure to recognize the thoroughgoing Burmese affiliations of these peoples. Much of it is

197 occupied with the futile question of the etymology of the name "Lo-lo", and with (largely) sterile discussions of Chinese sources. The most valuable of a number of articles of this type is the scholarly contribution by Feng and Shryock (cited infra).

One of the most useful criteria in distinguishing among these languages is found in the treatment of final -a, which is ordinarily retained in Lisu, Nyi, and Phupha, is shifted to -o in Ahi, Lolopho, and Chöko (somewhat irregularly here), to -u in the Ulu-Nasö dialects, and is retained or shifted to -ö, -ɔ in the Independent Lolo group. These correspondences are illustrated by the following table:

	Lisu	Nyi	Phupha	Ahi	Lolopho	Chöko	Ulu	Ind. Lolo
eat	dza	dza	dza	dzo	dzo	zo	dzu	dzö
salt	ts'a	ts'a	-	ts'o	ts'o	-	ts'u	tsö
five	ngwa	nga	nga	ngo	ngo	ngo	ngu	ngɔ

This criterion is not absolute, e.g. the Lisu dialect recorded in Clarke (Appendix II) has -o rather than -a, but is useful as a rule-of-thumb procedure.

60] In the present discussion the Lisu terminology will be analyzed first, followed by the Ahi-Nyi-Lolopho terminology and annotations on the remaining groups. The Lisu (Lisaw) [101] are primarily a Salween valley people, but have colonized extensively throughout most of Yunnan and have penetrated into northern Burma and the Shan States. The primary sources are the works of Fraser and Rose and Brown, but a number of

601 [101 197] There remains for consideration only the language of the Moso (Nakhi) of western Yunnan, which differs rather widely from the Northern Lolo languages just discussed. Only a few Moso terms, all badly recorded, are known; these have been taken from the works of Bacot, Rock, and Madrolle (by Monbeig) (note that in Madrolle the Moso and Kutsong = Tibetan lists have been accidentally reversed on pp. 564-65). The following terms are of Lolo type: a-ba F; a-mä ~ mä .. (also mi "female", in Rock); a-p'u gF (but a-tsö gM); a-bu oB (Nyi a-pu); so 3, mi ~ mi-zo D (also zu Ch. in Bacot). Note Moso a-p'u gF, a-bu oB, but Nyi a-bu gF, a-pu oB. The 3b terms are generally distinct from those in Lolo; Madrolle cites gö-zö yB, me-me o3i, ku-me y3i. Of primary importance, however, is the term a-gu B1 (Bacot), cognate with Ahi kö-pu-li y3iH, Akha a-kö B, and Burmese ats-kui oB; cf. Moso gu "9", Burmese kui^{3}; Moso k'u "to steal", Burmese k'ui^{3}; Moso hngu "to weep", Burmese ngui.

Despite the extent of literature on the Lolo, almost no material bearing on our problem can be found. Ahi and Nyi, which linguistically are fairly well known, are ethnographic blanks. Cross-cousin marriage can be established only for the Lisu, and even here the source is linguistic (Fraser) rather than ethnographic (Rose and Brown). Fraser's remarks in this connection are worth quoting in extenso, since the work is rare:

Sometimes an exchange will be made between two families, a man giving his daughter to another's son in exchange for the latter's daughter for his own son; this arrangement

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

131 Burma possessed no staples of trade to encourage
439

5. LANDING-STAGE IN THE TIDAL REGION.

177
779
[349]

enterprise of the peaceable sort. Left entirely to her own resources, she developed her character in independence. It preserves a large measure of its original freshness and charm.

Detached though Burma lay from the contact of other civilisation, the seed-corn of a spiritual influence was brought to her shore from afar, and took root and spread until it pervaded her whole life. The one extraneous influence under which she fell proved of a paramount order. But the inspiration of Buddhism was broadly human, not racial. Every people might take its message to heart in their own individual way. The restraints it enjoined and the ideals it held up became the occasions for Burma to unfold her own inmost nature. The abounding treasury of Buddhist legend furnished the subjects to exercise her poetic fancy. In the fifth century, A.D., long after Buddhism had declined at its source in India, and when it only prevailed in Ceylon, its real progress began among the people who were to give it an enduring home. Buddhism is popularly credited with five hundred millions of adherents. But the seven millions of Burma and perhaps a twentieth of that number in Ceylon, together with the half million Jains of India, are the practical Buddhists of the world. With the rest the profession has sunk to an empty name, as in China and Japan, or it is lax, as in Siam, or it is utterly transformed, as in Tibet.

6. RUINS OF CITY GATE, PAGAN.

●101 The phrase *Further India* gives point to a wide misconception. The surprise of so many persons on finding that the Burmans have no *caste*—to take the commonest instance—betrays the notion that Burma is part of India

[172]
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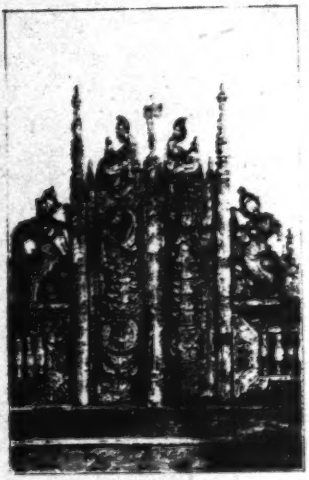
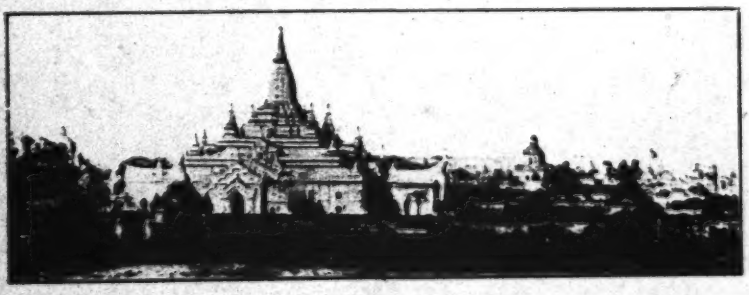
25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4



7. ANCIENT GATE, WITH FIGURES OF THADYA-MIN AND KEINNAYA.

is part of India. The phrase *Indo-China* is also misleading unless in respect of geography. In respect of climate, flora and fauna, *Further India* is not inapplicable. A probable Indo-Aryan admixture exists in the north-east (Arakán). But Burma Proper and Pegu are as distinct from India as Tibet itself.

The original Burman tribes are conjectured to have pushed their way south from the mountains of Tibet. They divided into three principal branches, Arakán (*Rakáing, Yakáing*) on the west, Paung on the east, and Burma (*Bamá*), which attained to the chief position, in the middle, on the northern Irawadi (*E-ya wadi*). Nothing is known of the early history of these nations. But it is certain that in 1000 A.D. Burma was a large and powerful kingdom, with its seat at Pagán. About that time the first historical conquest of the lower Irawadi was effected. From the fact that the country was not permanently subdued it may be inferred that the power of the Mun or Peguan race (later called Talaing) was not greatly inferior to that of the Burman. The Muns, from the affinities of their language, are conjectured to be of Annamitic origin. There is mention of the Pagán kingdom independently of the Burman chronicles, and there is above all the evidence of the ruins of Pagán, probably the mightiest of their kind. They testify to the power of the kingdom and the influence of the



8. ANANDA PAYA, PAGAN.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

next to a parent, with a life-long devotion.

Before or after the monastic novitiate, it is the custom for the Burman lads to have themselves tattooed from the waist to the knee (No. 152). Not to submit to this ordeal is to incur the reproach of cowardice. The tattooing is an intricate pattern of animals and tracery. Owing to the extent of surface involved, the process is most painful. It occupies days or weeks, according to the fortitude of the subject, who is drugged with opium for the occasion. The instrument has a handle weighted at the butt, and a long point of bronze, split like a ruling-pen. It is worked with great rapidity. The pigment is a kind of lamp-black of the consistence of ink. It shows bluish black through the brown skin. When a Burman tucks up his loin-cloth, as he always does for work or exercise (*kaddung-chait*), he looks as if he had black knee-breeches. As plain as the contrast is to the eye, ordinary photographic plates fail to render it. In No. 153 it appears fully. On other parts of the body the men frequently have horoscopes and cabalistic diagrams tattooed with vermilion (*se-ut*, No. 162) for luck and bravado. The Shan practice of letting in gold and silver discs the size of two-penny pieces—beneath the skin—is sometimes imitated by Burmans as a charm against sword-cuts and bullets (*dahyi*; *themahlyi*). The Arakanese, who repudiate the custom of *tigwin*, ascribe it to a Burman King, who endeavoured to disguise his leprosy in this way.

87. VILLAGE LAY SCHOOL.

88. BOX-PLAYERS.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792
735
[346]

48. FOREST KYAUNG.

[415]

ates the incumbent, regularly undertakes the support of the *phúdyi*, and frequently of his sojourner *yahán* as well. The food, which is the best of its kind, is brought every morning by the daughters and young children of the supporter, or, in the case of joint support, by children of the leading families in turn. An ornamented vessel is used, having a tall finial to the cover (*hti*). The supplies are received by the lay scholars or the novices, and by them served to the *yahán*. The principal meal is taken shortly before noon, for no food may be eaten after that hour till the following sunrise. Water may be drunk and betel chewed at any time. Tobacco-smoking is discountenanced, especially in Burma Proper, where the religious views are strictest. Burma furnishes the standard both for scholarship and practice, and trains most of the incumbents of the monasteries of Pegu. Scholars and novices may prepare food at the monastery from raw supplies. These the *yahán* may not even handle. Hired labour (*happiza dayaka*) may be attached to the monastery by the supporter for the preparation of food and other services. In some cases lands have been dedicated for the maintenance of monasteries and temples. But the *yahán* have no concern with their administration. Supplies of raiment, chattels and food are dedicated to the use of the recluses when the distinction of their presence is solicited, especially at *shinlaung* fêtes and funerals. The annual provision of raiment (*hatsin thingán*) is made between the months of *Thadingyut* and *Tazaungmón*. The offerings of necessaries are supplemented by accessories of every sort —books and writing materials, mats,

792
264
273
276
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[404]
792
735
[346]
[796]

50. VILLAGE KYAUNG.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

of the delta of the Irawadi, by which fresh silt-beds are raised to the cultivation level. The town of Thâton, now sixteen miles from the coast and without a sea approach, was, in historic times, a port. Ships came up to Tenaserim in the south, the ancient emporium of trade across the Peninsula to Siam, and to Akauttaung in the north, and probably to Pegu. A mass of precise data on this subject was collected by the late Mr. John Merrifield, who came to the conclusion that Tenaserim had risen fifteen to twenty feet in the course of the last 300 years. In 1900, ten and a half million acres were cultivated in Burma. The rice crop was estimated at three and a half million tons, of which two millions were exported, worth £14,000,000. Fallow lands were estimated at five and a half million acres and arable waste at twenty-four millions, out of a gross area of one hundred and one millions. In 1872 a considerable firm failed over the enterprise of bringing a few thousand acres of reputed arable waste at Kayásu under cultivation; the crops got so much water that they rotted. The area has lain waste ever since. Most of the waste land granted to companies has been resumed, on account of their failure to satisfy the condition of utilising the land. The conditions which render land suitable for wet cultivation are less simple than they appear at the first glance. It is possible that the estimate of the arable waste is much too high.

106. THE RICE PLANT IN THE EAR.

Where the fields depend on the surface-water for their supply, a margin of fallow has to be left; where they get a deposit of river-silt it is unnecessary. If manure is plentiful it is taken out on the fields. But this is seldom the case because the cattle are so much at large. On the outskirts of the rice-fields, which are dispersed in groups throughout the *kwin*, fallow land may readily relapse into waste. The depopulation of Pegu (Chronology, 1570, 1591–1740) threw great areas out of cultivation. Anyone was free to reclaim waste, and is so still. In Burma Proper, where good land is much scarcer than in Pegu, proprietors are fixed on the soil in many places by royal grants (*kha-mye, bôbabaing*). There were also royal demesne lands leased to tenants.

In the dry zone of Burma Proper, rice cultivation is impracticable except where rivers flood their margins or where facilities for irrigation exist. Rice

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

241
132
101
[438]

108. PLOUGHING IN THE DRY ZONE.

is a luxury in that region, and a part of the requirement is imported from Pegu. Crops of sorghum and millet (*pyaung*, *lu*), sesamum (*hnan*) and various pulses (*pè*), as well as cotton (*wā*), are obtained on the better sort of soil, during the light rains, from July to September. The dry soil is too hard for ploughing even when moistened by such rain as falls. It is scraped up with harrows instead. Four oxen are yoked abreast and the driver rides on the beam of the harrow to give it weight.

241
132
231

The wet or staple cultivation of the whole country begins between June and August, as soon as the grass-sod which has formed on the rice-fields in the by-season—and which has served for pasture in the interval—has got thoroughly water-logged. The soil is then turned, about six inches deep, with a wooden plough (*tè*, Nos. 102, 119) bearing a shoe of bronze or iron. Where elephants are available, a large *tôn* is used which does the work of four ploughs. The clods left by the plough are broken fine, and the wet soil worked into slush by herds of buffaloes driven round and round in the fields. If there are not enough cattle, the plough-clods are worked down with harrows drawn by buffaloes or oxen (No. 325). A rotary implement is coming into use to prepare the clods for the harrow (No. 168). There is very little open grass-land in the moist region. Unless the scrub which springs up is cut, the land soon relapses into jungle.

[136]

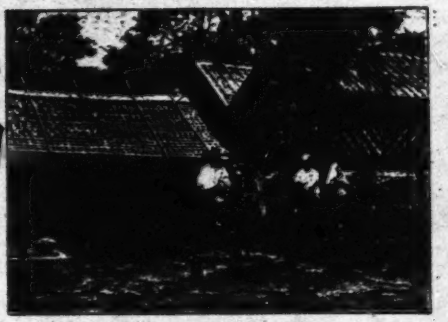
241
231

For the above operations cattle are needful to the cultivator, though he makes little use of the manure and does not use the milk at all. The cattle are only used for draught, and very little care is bestowed on breeding. Oxen

109. ELEPHANT PLOUGH.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

398
493
[492]



210 BURMAN PONIES.

for heavy wheels and the light spider wheels he uses in pleasure and racing-carts. He employs a very long hub to steady the wheel, which is as yet unprovided with turned axles and boxes. *Paddauk* and *pyinkadò* wood are used for hubs, with plain iron bushes at the ends. Teak is used for spokes and felloes. The axle is of imported round bar iron, with plain linch-pins; the end of the wooden axle-bed forms the shoulder. The bar-iron for tyres is likewise imported. Imported springs are coming into use for the light carts. European vehicles built by Chinese are used by well-to-do Burmans in the towns; they exemplify to the natives a novel departure in luxury, in which not splendour but comfort is the standard.

[177]

491
487

The country roads are merely the tracks made by the carts. As the bullocks travel in the line of the wheels, the road is passable until the ruts are so deep that the axle-bed scrapes the mound in the centre. Then the track is abandoned for one to the right or left. The same thing happens when the road is too heavy or when a tree falls over it. In the rice country the grain is carted across the fields. But in the dry zone a roadway is left between the fences of the fields, as is also the case in the eastern hill-plateaux. A few state roads (*sinlan*) following the high ground used to be kept clear, but the only regular road-making was done near to the capital. Cart-tracks do not penetrate the hill districts to any distance.

231
492
[485]
[101]

The Burman pony is small—eleven to thirteen hands—but is said to have the best constitution and the greatest endurance of any breed. In Pegu, with its damp climate, the breed does not flourish so well as in the North. The ponies exported from Pegu are brought down from the

211. WAYSIDE REST-HOUSE.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

268. TEMPLES RAISED BY A MODERN KING (THE KUTHODAW p. 122).

historic centres of Burman dominion. Sagáing was abandoned for the last time in 1776 for a new capital at Amayapôya (*Amarapúra*—Abode of Immortals) half-way between Ava (*Inwa*) and the modern capital Mandálé, which was founded in 1857, after the accession of King Mindôn Min. The most ancient capital is Tagáung, one hundred miles north of Mandalé. Other capitals were Shwebô, Myinzaing, Pannya. The capitals of the Talaing dominion were Thatôn, Pegu, and Prome (*Pyé*). Rangoon (*Yangôn*), at the meeting point of five navigable channels, and with anchorage for the largest ships, has out-distanced all competitors since the modern development of commerce.

For the history of Burma the only available source is the official chronicle kept by command of the kings—*mahá-yazawin*. The first part is occupied with the legendary origin of the race from the cloud-dwellers—*Byanmá* (the Burman form of *Brahma*).* The names and doings of legendary persons follow, and lines of legendary kings. The earliest historical facts which emerge are the founding of Tagáung, and incidents relating to the Buddha and the councils of his church in India. It is believed by Phayre that the *Suvanna Bhumi* of ancient Indian books refers to Thatôn, and that under *Chryse Chersonesus* Ptolemy refers to the Eastern Peninsula of Asia. We do not reach a connected history till the founding of Pagán about 100 A.D. From that epoch onwards the history of the peninsula, until the Burman Empire was consolidated and the dynasty of

269. FIGURES OF DYAMSA (BRONZE).

* The name is also written *Myanmá*, but commonly pronounced *Bamá*, of which "Burma(h)" and "Birma" are corruptions.